

THE HELPFUL GUIDE
FOR FAMILIES WITH
DISABLED CHILDREN

contact

It costs more to raise a disabled child so getting financial help can make a real difference to you and your family. You may be able to claim certain benefits and tax credits to help you with these extra costs. Some parents feel unsure about claiming benefits or think their child's condition won't count, but the support can be life changing so seek advice to ensure you don't miss out.

The system is complicated, and that's where Contact can help. Our helpline advisers can check that you're getting all the financial support you are entitled to.

The main benefits you could get for a disabled child are:

DISABILITY LIVING ALLOWANCE (DLA)

This is the main benefit for disabled children under the age of 16.

DLA isn't means-tested, so it's not dependent on how much you earn or what savings you have. Instead you need to show that your child needs more care or needs more help getting around outdoors than children of the same age who are not disabled. You can find out more information about this important benefit on page 16 of this book.

"My son has complex needs which affect his development, motor skills and behaviour. However, it never entered my head that he may be able to claim a benefit. After consulting the Contact website, I made a claim which has now been granted. This will make a big difference to us as a family. I only wonder that all the myriad social workers, doctors and other professionals we have seen over four years never mentioned it."

Parent carer

"DLA means my son gets the chance to do the same things other kids do."

Parent carer



Freephone helpline 0808 808 3555
www.contact.org.uk

PERSONAL INDEPENDENCE PAYMENT (PIP)

PIP is for people aged 16 to 64. There are two parts to it: the mobility component which is paid if your child has problems getting around, and the daily living component is paid if they have difficulties meeting their own care needs.

"The money's made a lot of difference. It's eased the pressure on my husband. We were relying on him to do overtime to see us through but now he's able to spend more time with my daughter and little boy."

Parent carer



FIND OUT MORE

We have information about claiming DLA and PIP on our website, plus two in-depth guides to help you to claim:

www.contact.org.uk/benefits

UNIVERSAL CREDIT

In some parts of the UK, means-tested benefits like Housing Benefit, Working Tax Credit, Child Tax Credit and Income Support (benefits that are affected by your income and savings) have been replaced by a new benefit called Universal Credit.

Universal Credit is gradually being extended to more and more areas and will cover the whole country by September 2018.

For the latest information about Universal Credit, please call our helpline on 0808 808 3555.

Some children and young people need more support than others to get as much as they can from education.

They might need extra help because they have difficulty with reading, understanding or talking. They might also find it hard to manage their emotions or are having problems developing physical skills.

A child who needs a lot of extra help with their learning has **special educational needs (SEN)** or **additional support needs (ASN)** in Scotland or **additional learning needs (ALN)** in Wales. Schools, nurseries and colleges have to support children and young people who have additional needs and to treat them fairly.

Schools must also support children with health conditions, including support to manage medications, personal care and to catch up after a period of absence.

"We have found that being positive, politely persistent, gritting our teeth and not falling out with the teachers has worked best in getting the support our daughter needs."
Parent carer



LIVING WITHOUT A DIAGNOSIS

There are many disabled children living without a diagnosis. If your child has an undiagnosed condition you may worry that you might not be able to get any help or support – but this is not the case. Every child is different, and your child is entitled to get support for their individual needs, regardless of whether they have a diagnosis.

You are entitled to have a social services assessment of your child's needs and your needs as a parent carer. More information about this on page 17.

You may also be entitled to receive benefits such as **Disability Living Allowance**, depending on the level of support or care that your child needs. Find more information on this on pages 16-17.

"I felt that getting a name for our daughter's condition would help us when explaining to others what was wrong, but in the end it didn't matter. All the professionals involved needed to know was what the immediate difficulties were, so the right care could be arranged."
Parent carer



FIND OUT MORE

Our website has more information on support if you don't have a diagnosis, including a free guide for parents, *Living without a diagnosis*:

www.contact.org.uk/no-diagnosis



Freephone helpline 0808 808 3555
www.contact.org.uk

PARENT SUPPORT

Many parents say that other parents are the best source of advice and insight into their child's condition. Support groups in your area can:

- Help you find specialists to help you get a diagnosis if your child has lots of symptoms of a particular condition
- Give you information about your child's condition

"I wait in the car until the doctor is ready to see my daughter – the receptionist rings me and we walk straight in."
Parent carer



FIND OUT MORE

Our freephone helpline can tell you about support groups in your area.

Contact them on 0808 808 3555, or email helpline@contact.org.uk

ATTENDING APPOINTMENTS

If your child has an appointment to see a GP or a specialist, it can sometimes be difficult for them. They might be worried about going to new places or meeting new people. Here are some tips:

Top tips on attending appointments

- Try to get appointments early in the day, as there is usually less of a wait.
- If your child doesn't like to be in crowds of people, ask if there is a quieter room you can wait in.
- Try to get appointments with the same person every time, so you don't have to repeat your story.
- Before a doctor sees your child, tell them what your child doesn't feel comfortable with.



FIND OUT MORE

Find more tips on making appointments easier:

www.contact.org.uk/appointment-tips