

**THREADS**

**OF**

**SUCCESS**

## Disability Access Fund (DAF) Guidance for Early Years and Childcare Providers in Kent

Making reasonable adjustments and  
purchasing or loaning resources.



Early Years &  
Childcare Service

**THE EDUCATION  
PEOPLE**

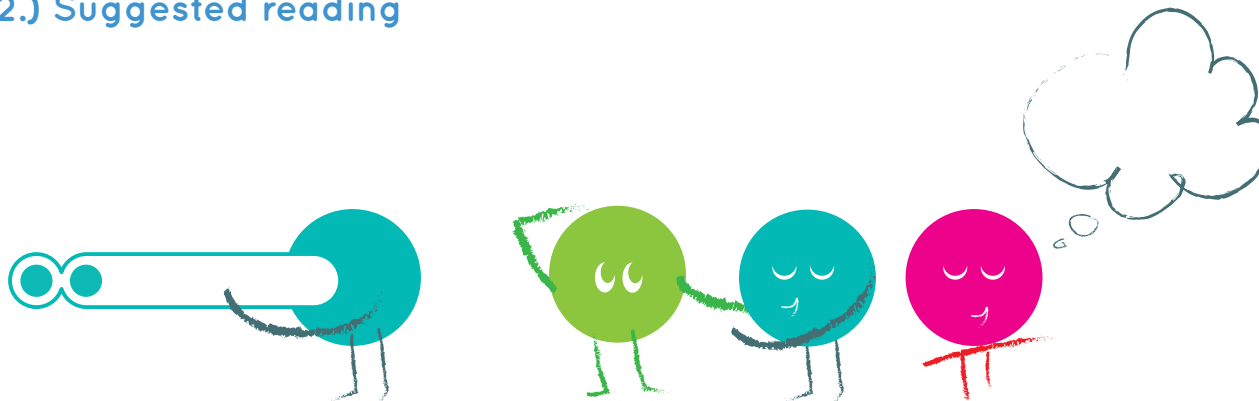


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1.

## What is the Disability Access Fund?

The Disability Access Fund (DAF) is additional funding for early years and childcare providers to support children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND).

The fund is for providers with three and four-year-olds whose families are in receipt of Disability Living Allowance (DLA) and taking up their early education funding entitlement.

Kent County Council has extended DAF to include eligible two-year-olds from September 2021 to September 2023.

The DAF aids access to early years and childcare, supporting providers in making reasonable adjustments to their settings and/or helping with building capacity, be that for the child in question or for the benefit of children attending the setting.

The DAF is an annual payment of £800.00 for each child that is eligible. We would encourage providers to identify potentially eligible children by talking to parents and carers to find out if their child is in receipt of DLA on admission and thereafter.

Parents may find the following documents useful.

[Disability Living Allowance \(DLA\) for children](#)

[Easy Read Guide to DAF](#)



2.

## Why is Disability Access Fund important and what are your legal responsibilities?

All early years and childcare providers have a legal duty to make reasonable adjustments to ensure that children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities can access all your provision under the Equality Act 2010.

Kent County Council administers the Government funding known as DAF to ensure that all children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities have equal access to early education.

Equal access refers to the means or opportunity to enter the provision or space where early education is to take place and the means or opportunity to engage with the Early Years Foundation Stage (2021).

To ensure providers do not discriminate they must make reasonable adjustments for children with special educational needs and disabilities. This involves taking positive actions to ensure that children can participate in early education and enjoy all the benefits and services offered by the provider. Reasonable adjustments will include the learning environment, provision, curriculum, admissions criteria, practices, services, and physical features.



### 3.

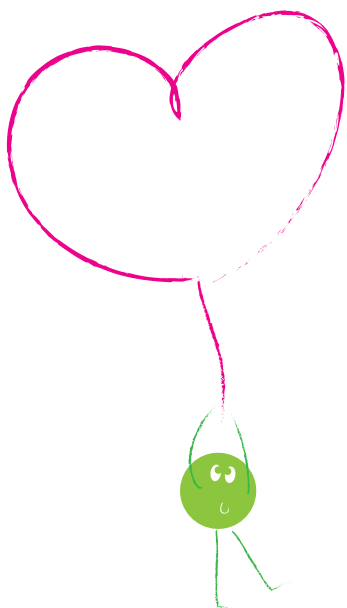
#### Eligibility

Kent providers can receive DAF where a two, three or four-year-old child is taking up a place and the child is in receipt of DLA and their free early education entitlement for some or all hours of their entitlement.

Four-year-olds in primary school reception/foundation stage classes are not eligible for DAF.

Only one provider can claim DAF per child, therefore if a child is attending another provider, the parent(s) and carers will need to nominate the provider to whom they wish this payment to be made. This is recommended to be where the child is accessing more of their free hours; however, this may not be the case for all children.

If a child moves providers halfway through the year, the funding will stay with the current provider; it is not transferable and does not follow the child.



### 4.

#### Application Process

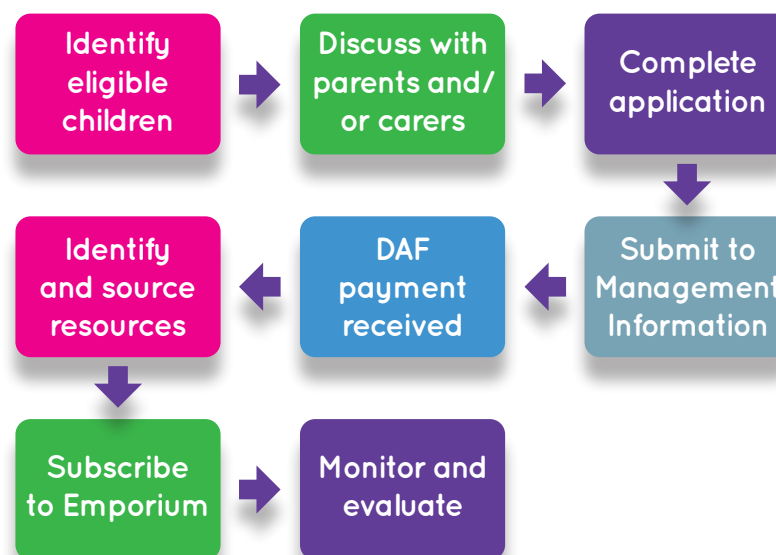
Parents and carers that are eligible must provide their child's early years provider with a copy of their latest DLA awards notice and this must be sent by their provider with the claim form to Management Information. The awards notice must cover the term in which the provider wishes to claim the initial funding.

[DAF Funding Claim Form Two-Year-Olds](#)

[DAF Funding Claim Form Three- and Four-Year-Olds](#)

The claim form will be acknowledged within 10 working days via email. If there is documentation missing, Management Information will contact the provider asking for evidence to be supplied.

This flowchart shows the full process of applying for DAF, from identifying eligible children to accessing the additional Emporium subscription and monitoring the effectiveness of the funding.



## 5.

### How will early years providers receive Disability Access Fund?

Kent County Council will fund the fixed annual rate of £800.00.

DAF is not offset against any other funding which the Local Authority may be providing for the eligible children.

The first payment for the term will be made after the balancing funding payment for two, three and four-year olds has been made, as long as the child appears on the provider headcount for the term, then weekly thereafter until the end of the term.

Providers will be emailed when the payment has been made and it will show who it is for. For the second year the DAF payment is automatically paid to the provider, provided the original evidence covers the period and that the child is still claiming free early education for two, three and four-year-olds with the provider named on the original claim form.

If a child receiving DAF moves from one provider to another, the new provider is not eligible to receive DAF funding for this child until the anniversary of the first payment has passed. DAF funding received by the original provider will not be recouped.

If a child eligible for the DAF is splitting their free entitlement across two or more providers, the Local Authorities will ask parents and carers to nominate the main provider. Kent County Council will pay DAF for the child to the nominated main provider.

Where a child lives in another Local Authority and attends a provider in Kent, funding the DAF for the child is the responsibility of Kent County Council, the Local Authority in which the provider is based.

## 6.

### Guidance in using DAF to support children with SEND

It is the responsibility of the provider to identify what reasonable adjustments may be required to enable the child to have equal access to the provision in the same way as another child. This should include providing basic entry into the setting. Providers must use their own judgement and experience of the child and setting to make decisions around the spending of DAF. Providers should liaise with the child's parents and engage with relevant professionals to ensure the DAF is spent appropriately. This may include the Early Years Equality & Inclusion Adviser, Specialist Teacher, Special Educational Needs Inclusion Fund (SENIF) practitioner or SENIF Monitoring Officer, Portage practitioner and/or Children's Care Coordination Team.

Providers who have more than one child that will be eligible for DAF may use the money for all children as one pot of money to support an adjustment or purchase resources that will benefit more than one child.

Any resources purchased as part of DAF remain the property of the provider and the resources can be used to support current and future children to access the provision. However, if a child is moving onto another provider, you may decide to make arrangements for the transfer of any resources that will benefit the child's access into the new provider. This will only be possible for non-static items and is at the discretion of the provider who purchased the equipment.

Resources can be shared with parents to be used at home during weekends and holidays, if it is felt it will benefit the child.

Providers are expected to spend the full £800.00 on the child, and if the equipment/adjustment is more than that amount, providers are expected to fund this gap.

## Keeping evidence

Providers must keep receipts and proof of what the DAF has been spent on for audit purposes by Kent County Council. Ofsted is interested in the quality of support for any children with SEND:

‘Inspectors will evaluate the impact of additional funding and any additional support and/or arrangements for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND)’

Early Years Inspection Handbook 2022



## Emporium

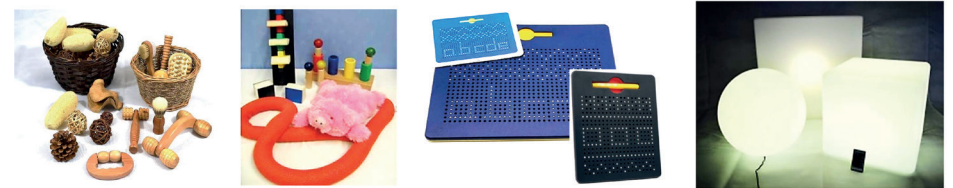
Emporium loan high-quality equipment and resources to support children receiving DAF.

Emporium is an educational resource loan service that provides high-quality play and learning resources that can extend your enabling environment for children with SEND. Our main goal is to provide support in all areas of learning to improve children's chances of achieving their full potential at the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage.

If providers have a child, or children, aged three or four-years-old who are accessing DAF funding, Emporium can offer an annual free Silver Subscription funded by Kent County Council. This additional benefit has been extended to eligible two-year-olds until September 2023. A Silver Emporium subscription will enable providers to loan up to 16 resources over four deliveries and one of those loaned items can be from the High Value Section.

Providers accessing DAF for eligible two-year-olds will also receive a small resource box to support children's development whether or not they take up their Emporium subscription.

Please visit the [Emporium & DAF](#) pages to find out more.



Visit our pages on The Education People website for more information on the service.

Phone: 03301 651 160

Email: [emporium@theeducationpeople.org](mailto:emporium@theeducationpeople.org)

## Appendix A

The list provided is not an exhaustive list. It aims to provide ideas and suggestions on how DAF funding can be used to purchase resources to engage children in their learning.

Physical Access	Communication and Interaction (C&I)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Ramps</li><li>• Handrails/suction grab rails</li><li>• Steps/non-slip paint</li><li>• High visibility tape</li><li>• Blackout blinds/anti-glare film to create contrast</li><li>• Low level doorbell/handles</li><li>• Low level coat hooks and cubbies</li><li>• Changing tables/mats</li><li>• Hoist</li><li>• Footrests</li><li>• Captain chairs</li><li>• Corner seat/corner guards for furniture</li><li>• Sitting wedge</li><li>• Fidget floor mats</li><li>• Adjustable tables</li><li>• Walker/rollator</li><li>• Bumpons - tactile marking resource</li></ul> <p><b>Outdoor play:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Smooth play surface</li><li>• Gates</li><li>• Adapted trikes</li><li>• Weighted balls</li><li>• Adjustable swings</li><li>• Outdoor clothing</li><li>• Tuff trays</li><li>• Sensory garden equipment, bell ball</li></ul>	<p><b>Cause and Effect toys:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Click Clack Tracks</li><li>• Pop-up Pirate</li><li>• Bubbles/bubble machines</li><li>• Noisy shape sorters</li><li>• Talking buttons/tiles/toys</li><li>• Magic power ball/multi-spinner</li></ul> <p><b>Augmentative devices:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 'Switch' toys</li><li>• Touch screen choosing board</li><li>• Communication board</li><li>• Big Mac button</li><li>• Whisper phone/talking tube</li><li>• Recording devices/voice recorders</li><li>• Fidget toys</li><li>• Visuals to support choice</li><li>• A5 Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS) books</li><li>• Communication Friendly Spaces bags (Elizabeth Jarman)</li><li>• Babbling Babies, Chatter Matters and Toddler Talk cards</li><li>• Puppets</li><li>• Story apron/story boards</li><li>• Story sacks, song baskets, nursery rhyme baskets/song box</li><li>• Traffic light fans</li><li>• Ear defenders</li></ul>



### Cognition and Learning (C&L)

When looking at resources to support Cognition and Learning, it is often a matter of increasing the range of current toys and resources, rather than looking for a 'special' resource. Our 'best practice resources' are usually all that is necessary to enable full cognitive development, but you are likely to need more of them.

#### Toys that promote:

- Problem-solving (eg fixed piece jigsaws, posting, connecting parts...)
- Matching and sorting (eg natural objects, trays to help focus...)
- Extra resources so that they can be transferred from one environment to the other (eg from the doll's house to water play...)

Other resources include:

- Treasure boxes
- Torches and lenses
- Toys which require two people
- Simple board games
- Memory games
- Musical instruments (sound differentiation, following and inventing pattern...)
- Attention and concentration games
- Small world duplicates
- Replication inside and out (change in scale eg sheet over table tent indoors, sheet over washing line outside)
- Pretend tent inside, real tent outside
- Mini milk crates inside, real crates outside
- Road sign cards/real road signs
- Mark making scale up (charcoal twig/charcoal branch etc)

### Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH)

- Role play equipment
- Weighted blanket
- Light/bubble tube
- Cosy basket
- Dens/tents
- Sand/water play
- Calming sensory toys
- Safe space outside – tent, wigwam, etc
- Dolls/soft toys
- Sensory mood lights
- Persona Dolls
- Sensory bag/box for calming and de-escalation
- Box of feelings, including pictures and mirror
- Emotion stones/emotional fans
- Special boxes
- Soft toys
- A range of feelings and emotions books

## Appendix A

<p><b>Visual Impairment (VI)</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Slime/foam</li> <li>• TACPAC - communication resource using touch and music</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bumpons - tactile marking resource</li> <li>• Sensory balls/light up balls/ bell balls</li> <li>• Tactile books, sensory stories and audio books</li> <li>• Light tables/light writing board - boards light up when drawn on</li> <li>• Light box</li> <li>• Auditory cause and effect toys</li> <li>• Light up toys/touch activated light and sound equipment</li> <li>• Mirror den/blackout tent/space blanket</li> <li>• UV colour rods</li> <li>• Glitter storm set/Wikki Sticks</li> <li>• Touch and Match board</li> <li>• High visibility tape to create clear boundaries/ pathways</li> </ul>	<p><b>Hearing Impairment (HI)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bead drum</li> <li>• Noisy pillows</li> <li>• Thunder shaker</li> <li>• Resonance bean bag</li> </ul>
<p><b>Multi-Sensory Impairment (MSI)</b></p>	<p><b>Physical Disability</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adjustable tables/seats/reading slopes and stands</li> <li>• Appropriate seats eg arm rests</li> <li>• Outdoor equipment</li> <li>• Non-slip mats/Dycem matting</li> <li>• Caring Cutlery – size appropriate</li> <li>• Easy-grip scissors/ long loop scissors/ double loop scissors</li> <li>• Left-handed tools/scissors/triangular pencils</li> <li>• Range of pencils and pencil grips</li> <li>• Fine motor equipment, clothes pegs/peg boards</li> <li>• Threading</li> <li>• Soft play equipment</li> <li>• Mini trampoline</li> <li>• Balancing beams</li> <li>• Construction</li> <li>• Back wedge</li> <li>• Ride-on toys/hand-operated</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Move 'n' sit cushions, Big Mack switches, Jelly Bean switches, switch boxes</li> <li>• Cause and effect toys</li> <li>• Sensory toys/coloured glue sticks</li> <li>• Dycem matting</li> <li>• High vis paint</li> <li>• Vibrating cushions</li> <li>• Therapy balls/hedgehog balls, aero balls</li> <li>• Liquid floor tiles</li> <li>• Mirrors</li> <li>• Sensory blocks/magnetic drawing boards/abacuses/ 3D shape sorters</li> <li>• Sensory bags</li> <li>• Sensory mood lights</li> </ul>	

## Appendix A

Self-care	General
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Toilet frames/steps/seats</li><li>• Kneeling pads for staff</li><li>• Potties with arms and backs</li><li>• Feeding materials</li><li>• Non-slip mats</li><li>• Specialist cutlery</li><li>• Angled plates</li><li>• Variety of cup</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Printer</li><li>• Laminator</li><li>• Velcro</li><li>• Secure box for medication/mobile box for trips</li><li>• Visual timelines</li><li>• Communicate In Print 3 Licence</li></ul>

## Appendix B

Further Reading
<p>Special educational needs and disability code of practice: 0-25 years (2015)</p> <p>Statutory framework for the early years foundation stage (2021)</p> <p>Equality Act (2010)</p> <p>Special Educational Needs Inclusion Fund (SENIF)</p> <p>Easy Read Guide to DAF</p> <p>Best Practice Guidance</p> <p>DAF pre-recorded webinar</p>

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Early Years and Childcare Excellence

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