



Benefits and Entitlements

This document details some **benefits and entitlements** that you may be eligible for if your child is attending a Children's Disability Network Team.

Applying for benefits and entitlements can be an emotive experience for parents as it is often necessary when filling in forms to focus on what your child finds challenging rather than his or her strengths. The language used on some official forms can also be insensitive and outdated. This can make form filling more difficult but should not be a barrier to applying.

It can be very difficult to describe on paper how your child presents, to a person who has never met you or your child. Some parents have found it useful to outline in writing an average day with their child, describing the help and support you provide to complete each task and the challenges that may present throughout the day.

It may also be helpful to ask for advice from other parents who have experience of filling in the same forms, or from a professional who is working with your child. If you have difficulty in filling in forms, or if your application is refused and you need to make an appeal, you can request a referral to the Social Worker on the Children's Disability network team.

Domiciliary Care Allowance

[Domiciliary Care Allowance](#) (DCA) is a monthly payment for a child aged under 16 with a disability, who requires ongoing care and attention, substantially over and above the care and attention usually required by a child of the same age. It is paid directly to the parent (guardian or foster parent) of the child, with whom the child is habitually resident. It is not means tested, so it does not take into account your own income or any other social welfare payments. It is not based on the type of disability or a diagnosis, but on the physical or mental impairment which results in your child needing more care and attention than another child of the same age. Consider also the developmental milestones that are appropriate for your child's age. It is important that the section filled in by your GP gives an accurate representation of your child's needs; if your GP does not know your child well it is advised to speak to them before they fill in the form.

The Dom Care 3 (Specialist) form does not have to be included, but if your child is seeing a specialist very regularly it may be helpful for them to complete this. Otherwise you should include copies of diagnostic reports and any recent clinical assessments. You may wish to refer to 'Medical Eligibility Guidelines for DCA', which are available on www.gov.ie.

The current rate of Domiciliary Care Allowance rate is €360 per month (January 2025). There is no restriction on the number of children for whom you may claim Domiciliary Care Allowance (In other words, if you are caring for more than 1 child who qualifies for Domiciliary Care Allowance, you may claim the full monthly allowance for each child).

Domiciliary Care Allowance is a 'gateway allowance' for eligibility for Carers Allowance, the Carers Support Grant, and a medical card for your child. You can download an application form from www.gov.ie.

Carers Support Grant (formerly Respite Care Grant)

The [Carer's Support Grant](#) is an annual payment made to carers by the Department of Social Protection. The scheme name was changed from the Respite Care Grant in 2016 to better reflect how the Grant is used. Carers can use the grant in whatever way they wish. You can use the grant to pay for respite care if you wish, but you do not have to do so.

In June of each year (usually on the first Thursday of the month), the grant is paid automatically to carers in receipt of Carer's Allowance, Carer's Benefit, or Domiciliary Care Allowance from the Department. In some circumstances, for example if your child is over 16, you may make a separate application for this payment. Only one Carer's Support Grant can be paid for each person getting care. The current rate of this payment is €2000 (June 2025).

Carers Leave

The Carer's Leave Act 2001 allows employees to leave their employment temporarily to provide full-time care for someone in need of full-time care and attention (for example a child in receipt of Domiciliary Care Allowance). This is called [Carer's Leave](#). Your right to Carer's Leave from employment is complemented by the Carer's Benefit Scheme. You are entitled to take carer's leave of at least 13 weeks up to a maximum of 104 weeks. If you ask to take less than 13 weeks' carer's leave, your employer may refuse your request.

Carer's Leave from employment is unpaid but the Carer's Leave Act ensures that those who propose to avail of Carer's Leave will have their jobs kept open for them for the duration of the leave. You may be eligible for Carer's Benefit if you have enough PRSI contributions. If you do not qualify for Carer's Benefit you may qualify for Carer's Allowance depending on your household means. You can take Carer's Leave even if you do not qualify for either of these payments.

Carers Benefit

[Carer's Benefit](#) is a payment for people who have made social insurance (PRSI) contributions and who have recently left the workforce or have reduced their hours of work to 18.5 hours per week or less and are looking after somebody in need of full-time care and attention (for example a child who qualifies for Domiciliary Care Allowance). You do not have to be the person who gets the allowance for the child to

be the child's carer. The current rate of Carers Benefit (June 2025) is €261 per week, (with increases for child dependants).

If caring for two or more people, your rate is increased by 50%. You can also earn up to €450 per week from part-time work in addition to your payment. From July 2025, this will increase to €625.

You are entitled to Carers Benefit for a total of 104 weeks per qualifying person. Both parents of a qualifying child have a separate entitlement to Carers Leave and Carers Benefit, once the child resides with them, and it is taken at a different time. For example, a mother of a qualifying child can take 104 weeks leave, and then subsequently the child's father can take a further 104 weeks leave. If you decide not to return to work, you can apply for Carers Allowance once the full Carers Benefit has been paid. You are not entitled to the Household Benefits package and Free Travel under the Carer's Benefit Scheme. You can apply for a GP visit card.

Carers Allowance

[Carer's Allowance](#) is a **means-tested payment** for carers who look after a person in need of full-time care and attention on a full-time basis. You must be 18 years old or over and not employed, self-employed or in training or education for more than 18.5 hours per week. You cannot get Carers Allowance for a child under 16 unless they qualify for Domiciliary Care Allowance. For a young person over sixteen, a medical report has to be filled in demonstrating that the young person requires full time care and attention.

If you are in receipt of another social welfare payment such as One Parent family Payment and you are providing someone with full time care and attention you may qualify for a reduced rate of Carers Allowance as well as your original payment. If you have dependent children, you will be entitled to a full or half rate Qualified Child increase. If you are caring for more than one person, you can apply for an additional half-payment of Carers Allowance. Recipients of Carers Allowance will also qualify for the Household Benefits Scheme and the Free Travel Scheme. From January 2025, Carer's Allowance is a qualifying payment for fuel allowance.

The Carer's Allowance income disregard will increase to €625 for a single person and €1,250 for a couple from July 2025.

Disability Allowance

When your child turns 16, you are no longer entitled to a Domiciliary Care Allowance. They may however be entitled to [Disability Allowance](#). Disability Allowance is a weekly **means tested allowance** paid to people with a disability, who are unable to work. This is not paid automatically; your teenager will need to make an application (or you can help them to do so). The application form will need to detail why the young person would not be able to work in a job that would otherwise be suitable for a person of their age and experience. A medical report from the GP is also needed.

The current weekly rate of payment is €244 (January 2025) and is based on the young person's means (not parents' income). People can receive Disability Allowance from

16 years of age. If you are in education when you turn 16, you can continue to attend school.

Incapacitated Child Tax Credit

[Incapacitated Child Tax Credit](#) entitles parents and carers to claim €3,800 (January 2025) in tax relief if their child's disability is believed to be permanent. This credit can be claimed via the www.revenue.ie or by completing and [ICC1 form](#) and submitting it to your local revenue office. An [ICC2 form](#) completed by a medical practitioner is also required. This tax credit can be backdated for four years including the current tax year.

Home Carer's Tax Credit

[Home Carer's Tax Credit](#) is a tax credit of €1950 (January 2025) that can be applied in circumstances where one person stays at home to care for a child and is earning less than €7,200. If you earn between €7,200 and €11,100 you will receive a reduced tax credit. You must be married or in a civil partnership and jointly assessed for Income Tax to claim this credit.

Healthcare Expenses

[Healthcare Expenses](#) associated with your child's disability may be eligible for tax relief. Claim through your tax return form or by completing and income tax return if you are a PAYE taxpayer. This can be done online using Revenue's myAccount service.

Medical Card

If you have a medical card you don't have to pay to see your doctor, or for medicines they prescribe. A standard prescription charge per item applies.

A medical card also covers:

- public out-patient and in-patient services
- eye and ear tests
- dental checks

Ways to obtain a medical card

1. If a child is receiving DCA. This may come automatically if your GP is set up on the electronic medical card system. If not, [a short form can be filled and posted or submitted online](#).
2. If your family income is under a certain threshold you can apply for a [means tested medical card](#).
3. Some children will have received an Emergency Medical Card in hospital, when it expires a medical card can be obtained via the routes above.

Long Term Illness Scheme

A child can obtain a [LTI card](#) if they have [certain medical conditions](#). An LTI card means that you can get certain drugs, medicines and approved appliances for free from your pharmacy if you have one of the conditions listed. The scheme is not means tested and is open to those 'ordinarily resident' in Ireland.

Free Nappies Scheme

This scheme is available to children over the age of three who require nappies and are eligible for Domiciliary Care Allowance. For further information, you should contact your Public Health Nurse.

Home Tuition Grant

Home tuition is intended to provide education for children with a diagnosis of autism or who have a significant special educational need and who are awaiting the provision of an appropriate school based educational service. The form to apply for this can be downloaded from www.education.ie. It is available for children from the age of 2.5 years with a diagnosis of autism, and over 3 if a suitable early intervention or primary school placement is not available. In some circumstances Home Tuition may be allocated when a child's school placement has broken down. The Special Education Needs Officer will be able to further advise you on individual circumstances.

Parents need to identify a suitably qualified teacher to provide the service. Details and qualifications of the teacher must be included in the application form. This may be submitted with the home tuition application or directly to the Home Tuition Section, Special Education, indicating the name of the child to whom he/she will be delivering home tuition. Sanction of Home Tuition will only be given when full details of the proposed teacher are provided to the Department of Education and Science and the application has been fully completed. Copies of recent psychological assessment/any available professional reports should be attached.

Home Tuition is sanctioned on a term basis only/or until a school placement has been sourced (arrangements should not be entered into with teachers in anticipation of funding beyond the sanction date unless Department of Education & Science sanction has been received). Retrospective Grant Claim Forms will not be processed.

Summer Provision (July Provision)

The Summer Provision programme includes:

- School-based summer programme for children with special educational needs in special classes, special schools and mainstream schools
- Home-based provision for children with complex needs (where a school-based programme is not available)
- Summer camps in DEIS schools focussing on numeracy and literacy

Summer Provision is based on the *July Provision* which was delivered to children with special educational needs by the Department of Education in previous years.

The following children qualify for the school-based programme:

- Children in a special school or a special class
- Children in mainstream classes in primary schools who are accessing the highest level of the continuum of support. This includes children with autism, Down syndrome, sensory impairments, and other disabilities who were identified for the supplementary programme earlier this year.

Children in the above categories entering primary school next September are also eligible for the programme.

You can find more information on the programme here: [gov.ie - Summer Programme 2024: home-based programme](#)

Mobility Aids Grant Scheme

The [Mobility Aids Grant Scheme](#) (available through your local authority) provides grants for works designed to address mobility problems in the home, such as the purchase and installation of grab-rails, a level access shower, access ramps or a stair-lift. The scheme is primarily for older people, but people with a disability can also apply for it. The Mobility Aids Grant Scheme is available to people with a household income of **less than** €37,500 per year and provides a grant to the maximum value of €8,000 (January 2025).

If you need more extensive works done, or if you do not qualify under the means test, you can apply for the Housing Adaptation Grant for People with a Disability

Housing Adaptation Grant

A [Housing Adaptation Grant](#) is available from local authorities if you need to make changes to a home to make it more suitable for a person with a disability. You can apply if you own your house, are in a long term private rental agreement, or are purchasing your home from the local authority. If you are in local authority housing, your housing authority should meet the full cost of the works once approved.

The grant can help you to make changes and adaptations to your home, for example, making it wheelchair-accessible, extending it to create more space, adding a ground-floor bathroom or toilet or a stairlift. In some cases, the provision of heating can be included.

Your total annual household income must be less than €75,000 to qualify. The proportion of the grant is tapered depending on income.

If you only require minor work, such as installing grab rails or a ramp, you can apply for the **means-tested** Mobility Aids Grant Scheme instead.

Application forms are available from your local authority, Wicklow County Council; www.wicklow.ie.

Primary Medical Certificate

The Primary Medical Certificate is issued by the HSE and certifies that a person is 'severely and permanently disabled' for the purposes of Disabled Drivers and Disabled Passengers Regulations 1994.

In order to qualify, a person must be:

- Completely or almost completely without the use of both legs or
- Completely without the use of one of your legs and almost completely without the use of the other leg to the extent that you are severely restricted as regards movement in your legs or

- Be without both hands or both arms or
- Be without one or both legs or
- Be completely or almost completely without the use of both hands or arms and completely or almost completely without the use of one leg or
- Have the medical condition of dwarfism and serious difficulties of movement of the legs

You must contact your local HSE centre for an application form for a Primary Medical Certificate for your child. Once you apply, your child will be referred on for an appointment for an assessment with a Medical Officer. The Medical Officer will make an assessment of your child, and then you will be told whether it has been granted or not.

If the HSE refuses the application for a Primary Medical Certificate, you can appeal the refusal to the Disabled Drivers Medical Board of Appeal, National Rehabilitation Hospital, Rochestown Avenue, Dun Laoghaire, Co. Dublin.

Disabled Persons Parking Permit

If your child is over the age of three, and their mobility is restricted, you may be eligible to apply for a Disabled Persons Parking Permit, which is recognised across the EU and entitles the holder to park in a disabled parking bay free of charge for an unlimited period of time. The criteria is that the child is certified by GP/ has a primary medical certificate/ is certified blind. Form must be signed and stamped by your GP.

You may apply for a parking permit through the IWA (Irish Wheelchair Association) or the DDAI (Disabled Drivers Association of Ireland). Irish Wheelchair Association tend to be easier to access permits, you can apply online or phone 045 893 094 and they will send out a form. <https://www.iwa.ie/services/motoring/disabled-parking-permit-scheme>

There is a useful guide to the process available on the IWA website. The permit lasts for a period of two years.

You can check if your child qualifies using this link below:

[Eligibility Wizard - Disabled Drivers Association of Ireland \(ddai.ie\)](https://www.ddai.ie/eligibility-wizard)

Disabled Drivers and Disabled Passengers Scheme:

You can apply for both VRT and VAT tax relief under the Disabled Driver and Disabled Passengers scheme. Please refer to the following link to access further information about these tax reliefs:

https://www.citizensinformation.ie/en/travel_and_recreation/transport_and_disability/tax_relief_for_disabled_drivers_and_disabled_passengers.html.

Further information can also be found on Revenue's website:

[VRT7 Drivers & Passengers With Disabilities Organisations Tax Relief Scheme \(revenue.ie\)](https://www.revenue.ie/en/reliefs/VRT7_Drivers_Passengers_Disabilities_Organisations_Tax_Relief_Scheme)

In addition, vehicles adapted for disabled drivers or passengers are entitled to an exemption from toll fees, motor tax and a fuel grant.

Airport Assistance:

If you are flying through Dublin airport there are supports available for persons with a disability.

For children with physical mobility issues you may be eligible for an assistant to help you through the airport. See details here on how to apply:

<https://www.dublinairport.com/at-the-airport/passenger-information/special-assistance/reduced-mobility>

For children with autism you may be able to get a lanyard/wristband to enable your family to speed track through queues. You need to arrange this in advance and send a copy of a letter from your GP confirming the diagnosis in advance. The airport also provides visual guides and advice on planning your trip to the airport on this link:

<https://www.dublinairport.com/at-the-airport/passenger-information/special-assistance/autism-asd>

For further details please contact OCS (One Complete Solution - a company appointed to provide assistance) who can answer any queries you may have in relation to providing assistance. The OCS Main Office phone number is 353-19440341 or email prm@ocsireland.com

Additional Information and Support:

www.citizensinformation.ie

The citizen's information service provide online and phone support in relation to any enquiries about rights, benefits and entitlements. You can also contact them via Citizens Information Phone Service on **0818 07 4000** (Monday to Friday, 9am to 8pm) or in person at one of their centres ([Bray, Arklow and Wicklow Town](#)).

www.gov.ie

For application forms for social welfare payments

www.revenue.ie

For tax relief and credits

www.informingfamilies.ie

This website has information on benefits and entitlements available in Français (French), Gaeilge (Irish), Lietuvių (Lithuanian), Polski (Polish), Português do Brasil (Brazilian Portuguese), Română (Romanian), Русский (Russian),

www.shineireland.com

Advocacy and support for parents of autistic children

www.iwa.ie

www.mabs.ie

Money and budgeting advice and support

HSE Helpline: **1800 700 700**

Medical Card Office: 1890 252 919 (LoCall) or 01 8647100