



Family Assistance Fund: Information for families

What is the Family Assistance Fund?

The Family Assistance Fund provides small amounts of one-off funding (up to \$2,000¹ in 2006) for families to purchase services and equipment to help them care for their child with a disability at home and increase family well-being.

Funding can be used to make practical changes at home, provide support for individual family members that is otherwise unavailable, and purchase non-recurrent assistive equipment. The funding helps families to address specific needs and stresses before they become a crisis and to make a difference in the care of the child or young person with a disability.

What can be funded?

Examples of how Family Assistance funding can be used include:

- purchase of assistive equipment to help families care;
- resources to promote play activities and interaction between children/young people in the family and/or their parents;
- recreation activities for both the child with a disability and other children in the family (e.g. a total family outing, assistance to attend holiday activities);
- new resources to support the child or young person through transition stages and to help families manage care changes;
- services to increase parenting skills, communication and improve family routines in the longer term;
- training to improve caring skills;
- counselling or other forms of personal support for family members, including siblings;
- equipment/support to assist the child or family's community involvement and the development of personal support/peer networks;
- modifications to the house and garden to provide a safe, secure environment, or a car modification for transportation; and
- household equipment such as a washing machine or clothes dryer to assist with laundry for children with incontinence or a heater to prevent medical problems for a child with complex health care needs.

Funding is available for each child with a disability within a family. For example where there are two children with a disability the family is eligible for up to \$4,000 from the Family

¹ The amount of funding available for new applications will be adjusted per annum.

Assistance Fund. Families can also make a financial contribution towards costs e.g. to purchase equipment costing more than \$2,000.

What is excluded?

Funding is provided strictly on a one-off or time-limited basis. The Family Assistance Fund will not provide funding to:

- purchase any item or support that has ongoing, long term or recurrent costs; duplicate existing services or funding;
- fund shortfalls in existing services;
- act as bridging funding while awaiting longer-term care options;
- where the support service(s) or aids requested are available through other NSW or Australian Government programs;
- provide clinical assessment or therapy services;
- provide out-of-home placements and respite; nor
- purchase basic items such as food and clothing.

Who can get funding?

Families must be caring for:

A child or young person with a disability recognised under the Disability Services Act 1993, occasioning a significant functional impairment.

The Fund is accessible to families caring for a child or young person under 18 years of age who is eligible and receiving a service from DADHC or a DADHC funded non-government service.

The child or young person with a disability must be living with their birth or alternative family. Applications from families with children in short term alternative placements will be considered where the family can demonstrate that the funding will help them work towards their child returning to family care.

Priority will be given to:

- families on low to moderate incomes (in 2006 \$62,647 or less per annum);²
- families where the child or young person has multiple or complex medical and behavioural needs and/or where parents have health or other issues that impact on their parenting role or capacity to manage behaviours, routines and stresses;
- families where the care of the child or young person with a disability is having a significant impact on the well-being of their siblings;
- families with little or no access to extended family support or local support within their communities;
- families living in geographically isolated areas; and
- families who have not received Family Assistance Funding previously.

Eligibility does not automatically mean that a family will receive funding. The number of families able to be assisted is dependent on funding availability and level of need.

² Based on ABS Data 2001 Census data 120% of median income adjusted to 2006 using average weekly earnings.

How do you apply?

Families need to fill in and sign the Application Form attached. The Form includes a budget section where details of at least one written quote for the equipment or services to be funded needs to be added. Your case manager (or other DADHC worker) will provide advice and assistance in filling in the form and you will need to make sure they complete the checklist at the back of the form.

Additional application forms are available through the DADHC website (www.dadhc.nsw.gov.au), your case manager (or other DADHC worker). You can put in an application at any time.

A regional panel will consider applications regularly and make recommendations to the Regional Director or a delegated officer. The panel will include a DADHC officer, a government or non-government service and a person with a disability and/or a family member who is not seeking funding.

If approved, applicants will receive:

- notification of approval;
- a cheque for the amount of funding allocated; and
- information about how to account for spent funds.

To find out more about the Family Assistance Fund ask your case manager or contact your DADHC Regional/Area Office:

Metro North Region - (02) 8855 4200

Metro South Region - (02) 9334 3700

Western Region - 1300 134 450

Northern Region - 1300 364 563

Hunter Region - (02) 4908 5229

Southern Region

- Illawarra (02) 4254 0319
- Southern Highlands (02) 6200 7300

For more information:

www.dadhc.nsw.gov.au

This brochure is currently being translated into a number of community languages and tailored formats.

