

Information Sheet

Centrelink: Turning 16 and Disability Support

Updated June 2016.

Centrelink Carer Allowance payments generally stop when a child turns 16 years old. This article outlines some of the benefits available to individuals over 16 who are unable to work due to disability.

Carer Allowance

If you are a parent receiving Carer Allowance, this will stop when your child turns 16. You will need to lodge a new claim for Carer Allowance (adult) based on an assessment tool for adults. **The payment change does not happen automatically.** You will not be back paid if you don't lodge a new claim after your child's 16th birthday.

Although the application cannot be sent in and processed until your child has turned 16, you can start gathering all supporting documentation to go with it such as proof of identification, doctor's reports (etc.) before their birthday. This will make the process easier and eliminate the chance of missing any payments when the Carer Allowance stops and the new one begins.

You should let Centrelink know of your intent to claim **before your child's 16th birthday**. Once you have registered your intent to claim, a Centrelink Customer Service Officer will contact you within **2 days** to assist you and send you a claim form. From this date you will have **2 weeks** to place your application. If you need more time to complete the application, contact Centrelink to arrange this. The date that the Customer Service Officer contacts you is the date used to commence your payments. You should be back-paid from this date after your application is processed.

Centrelink have a range of payments for people over 16 with disabilities (although arranging them can be complicated and take a long time). Below we have outlined one payment, called the Disability Support Pension. **Not all individuals with autism will be eligible for this payment.**

For further information about individual eligibility, please contact Centrelink on 132 717.

The Disability Support Pension

The Disability Support Pension is a payment for people who have been assessed as having a physical, intellectual, or psychiatric impairment, who are unable to work for 15 hours (or more) per week at or above the minimum wage within the next 2 years.

To make an application for Disability Support Pension you need a **Treating Doctor's Report**. (The forms are available at the Centrelink website www.humanservices.gov.au.)

The report should be as thorough as possible to ensure the application is processed quickly. Book an appointment with the doctor once the person on the autism spectrum has their 16th birthday and have this form filled in. Be sure to take any



reports that may help your treating doctor fill out the form.

As part of the application process for the Disability Support Pension, the person applying will need to attend a Job Capacity Assessment at their local Centrelink office. This assessment is to see if they have any barriers preventing them from working and whether there are services which can help them overcome these.

If it is not possible to attend this type of meeting for any reason (such as difficulty leaving the house or anxiety around interviews), your treating doctor can state in their report that the person's condition prevents them from attending the Job Capacity Assessment meeting at Centrelink.

If you can attend the interview, a time will be set and an appointment letter sent out. There will be a phone number on the bottom of the appointment letter. You can call this number to discuss your needs and any concerns about the interview. This information will be passed on to the officer who will be interviewing you and can help the interview to run more smoothly.

If the person applying attends a Special Developmental School, a report from the school which indicates their intellectual disability, capacity for independence, and any other associated difficulties will help support your application.

The more supporting documentation you can gather, the better. Gathering all the relevant supporting information can take some time, which is why we recommend you start early.

The person applying will need **100 points of identification**. Proof of identification can take time to organise so once again begin early. You can contact Centrelink to check you have the sufficient identification.

Key points when applying for a Disability Support Pension:

- Start getting ready while the person who is applying is still 15 years old—so you will be ready when they turn 16!

- Check you have 100 points of approved identification.
- Gather as much supporting documents as possible (such as reports from school).
- Ensure the treating doctor's report is filled out thoroughly – this is the most important report in the application.

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