



# Lift the Rate of the **Child Disability Allowance**

Save the Children NZ calls for children living with a disability to be lifted out of poverty by increasing the Child Disability Allowance.

- 1** To achieve this, we call for a continued commitment to:  
A substantive lift to the Child Disability Allowance (CDA) to levels that will lift disabled children and their whānau out of poverty.
- 2** That the CDA is proactively made known to all whānau with a child eligible to receive the CDA.

Children living with a disability have the **right** to a decent standard of living and support to enjoy **full and decent lives**.



## **Every child has the right to a decent standard of living.**

Article 17 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child accords every child the right to a decent standard of living adequate for the child's physical, mental, spiritual, moral and social development,<sup>1</sup> this equally applies to disabled children.

Article 23 accords disabled children the right to enjoy full and decent lives, in conditions which ensure dignity, promote self-reliance and facilitate the child's active participation in the community. This includes the right to financial assistance to ensure disabled children can access education, readiness for employment, health and rehabilitation care, recreation, and active participation in their community.

## **What is the Child Disability Allowance?**

The Child Disability Allowance is a fortnightly payment of \$56.60 made to the main carer of a child or young person with a serious disability. The purpose of the CDA is a financial payment in recognition of the extra care and attention the child needs

## **The Link Between Child Poverty and Disability**

Children and with disabilities are disproportionately impacted by poverty. Many experience intersectional adversity, health challenges and associated costs. Additionally, parents of children with disabilities are constrained in their ability to earn an income outside of the home as they are already committed to the caring needs of their children. These challenges are well recognised including by the Committee of the Rights of the Child who stress the importance of allocating disabled children with adequate budgetary resources. **2**



## Ensure Equitable Access to the CDA

Equitable access to the CDA needs to be improved as barriers exist that prevent all whānau with disabled children from accessing it despite their eligibility. Barriers include costs and accessibility associated with obtaining relevant documentation and medical certificates, difficulties in navigating an overly complex system, discrimination, and racism, and even knowing that this allowance exists.<sup>3</sup> Disabled children and their whānau not accessing the CDA are more likely to be living in poverty, and/or identify as Māori, or Pasifika.<sup>4</sup>

## The Data is Clear that Disabled Children are Overrepresented in Child Poverty Measures.

According to Stats NZ 2021/22 Child Poverty Statistics for Aotearoa, disabled children and children in households where someone is disabled are more likely to be in poverty according to the nine child poverty measures.<sup>5</sup>

For disabled children, results for the primary child poverty measures for the year ended June 2022, indicated:

1 in 6 (17.0 percent) lived in households with less than 50 percent of the median household income before deducting housing costs (measure 'a'), with no statistically significant change compared with 2020,

1 in 7 (15.1 percent) lived in households with less than 50 percent of the baseline year's median income after housing costs were deducted (measure 'b'), a statistically significant decrease in the rate compared with 2020 (21.5 percent).

1 in 5 (21.5 percent) lived in households experiencing material hardship, with no statistically significant change compared with 2020.<sup>6</sup>

Material hardship rates show that disabled children are missing out on more than 6 of the 17 basic things most people would regard as essentials. Such as, regular access to a healthy diet, not being able to pay for a household energy bill on time, lack of warm clothing or shoes.

Recent improvements in data collection are heartening where Stats New Zealand can now report on data that shows how disabled children are impacted poverty.<sup>7</sup> However, limitations still exist where further disaggregation is not available, for example how many disabled children in poverty also identify as tamariki Māori.<sup>8</sup> For more accurate insights into how disabled children experience poverty, improvements to data collection are still required.<sup>9</sup>

Every Child has the **right** to a decent standard of living and support to enjoy **full and decent lives.**

Lift the **Child Disability Allowance** and help close the poverty gap.

## Sources

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