



## How to Obtain a Disability Parking Sticker



Families that have children with Batten Disease are eligible to receive disability parking placards and license plates. While each state controls their own issuance of these items, the process to obtain them is relatively the same. **You do not have to wait until your child is in a wheelchair to receive a disability parking placard or license plate.** There are a few things you need to know before heading off to the Department of Transportation and asking for your parking placard.

Most states have the form that you need to complete available on the internet. These forms are also available at your local licensing bureau or through your state's Department of Transportation. If you choose to print the form off the internet, it is a good idea to print the form twice. Some states require that the information on the form be typed only. If your form does not allow hand-written information, having two forms allows for one to be for signatures only and the other to be for gathering information.

Carefully read over the form. Make sure you know exactly what you need from your doctor to make your visit go as smooth as possible. Some states require a letter from the doctor on his/her letterhead stating that the disability parking placard is necessary. Other states may only require a signature on the form. Call your doctor's office first to see if an appointment is even necessary to obtain the information you need for the parking placard. It may be possible for you to drop it off and pick up the form and the letter of medical necessity later that day or week. It may also be possible for someone other than your physician to complete the paperwork. In some states, nurse practitioners, physical therapists, occupational therapists, or physician's assistants are also able to sign the forms for a disabled parking placard or license plate.

Different states have different eligibility requirements for obtaining a disability placard. Here are a few of the standards you may come across:

- Cannot walk 200 feet without stopping to rest;
- Uses portable oxygen;
- Is severely limited in the person's ability to walk due to an arthritic, neurological, or orthopedic condition;
- Is a blind individual whose central visual acuity does not exceed 20/200 in the better eye with correcting lenses;
- Cannot walk without the assistance of another person, prosthetic device, wheelchair or other assistive device.

These are only a few of the standards under which a child with Batten Disease may qualify for a disability parking placard. Make sure to have your doctor check all of the eligibility standards under which your child qualifies. It is always better to be over-qualified for a parking permit, than to leave the Department of Transportation any room to question your child's eligibility.

Remember that you will need a permanent disability parking placard/permit. Temporary permits are only for people whose condition is expected to improve in 6 months or less. These would be for individuals who suffer from a broken leg, have had major surgery, or another temporary medical issue. The length of time that your parking placard is valid will vary from state to state. For some states you may need to renew your parking placard every year, while other states may require you to renew your placard every five years. Also, some states will let the parent, guardian, or family member of a person with a disability receive disability license plates, yet other states require the person with the disability to have the vehicle in their name. Having disabled license plates is not necessary to receive the same parking privileges as those with disability placards/permits. Disabled license plates just help others to better identify that your vehicle has a person with a disability on board.

In most states, obtaining a disability parking placard/permit is free. These parking placards can be used in any vehicle as long as the person with the disability is present in the vehicle. Disability license plates incur the same fees as regular license plates as well as the same renewal fees. Another interesting bit of information to know is that in some states, vehicles with a disability parking placard/permit or license plate do not have to pay to park in a metered space. Check with your state's driving and parking laws for disability specific information.

It is unlikely, but possible, that your request for a disability parking placard is denied. If this is the case, do not become frustrated. Like most other situations, you will most likely have the right to appeal their decision. Find out what your rights are in the appeal process and take the necessary steps to appeal the decision. It may be as simple as having your doctor write you a letter of support with more specific information, or obtaining supporting documentation from your neurologist or physical therapist. Whatever the reason, assert your right to appeal and get the service you need.

You now have the information you need to obtain a disability parking placard for your vehicle. This is one small way you can make traveling a little easier for you, your family, and your child with Batten Disease. Please remember that not all of the information in this document is applicable to every state. Check your state's parking and transportation authority for specific questions. If you have additional questions about the information contained in this document, please contact Amy Kirk, Coordinator of Family Services at 1-888-379-2546 or [kirka@bdsra.org](mailto:kirka@bdsra.org).