

SSI FOR CHILDREN

What is SSI?

SSI stands for Supplemental Security Income. It is NOT Social Security although it is administered by the Social Security Administration. SSI is a federal assistance program that makes monthly payments to anyone who is low income and meets Social Security's definition of disability or is over age 65.

SSI supplements the disabled person's monthly income up to a set federal amount. The SSI monthly amount for 2007 is \$623, for 2006 it was \$603.

There is no age limit for the disability requirement. Children from birth up to age 18 may get SSI, along with adults under age 65.

What is Low Income?

Before Social Security can make a disability decision the disabled child must meet the income limits. The income and resources of the child is considered. The monthly income limit for the child is \$623 and the resource (asset) limit is \$2000. Assistance payments to the child do not count toward the income limit. Two-thirds of child support payments to the child do count as income.

If the child is living with parents the income and resources of the parents count toward the income limit. This income limit varies depending on whether there are one or two parents in the household, the number of other children in the household, and what kind of income the parents have. For example: the monthly wage income limit for a household with two parents, two children, and the one disabled child is \$3861. A household with two parents can have up to \$5000 of countable assets.

The disabled child's monthly SSI check is determined by the amount of the countable household income. The maximum SSI check in 2007 is \$623 and the minimum is \$1. Eligibility to an SSI check, no matter the amount, gives the disabled child eligibility to Medicaid.

What is Social Security's definition of disability?

Social Security has a strict definition of disability for children. The child must have a physical or mental condition that very seriously limits his or her activities; **and** the condition must have lasted, or be expected to last at least 1 year or result in death.

You must file a claim with Social Security in order to have this decision made.

What is the SSI claims process?

Parents or the adult responsible for the child's care can apply for SSI for the disabled child. You will need information about the income and assets for the child and the parents if the child is in the parents' household.

You will need the names of hospitals, clinics, doctors, or therapists that have seen the child within at least the last 12 months. Names of other agencies that have records on the child are important, such as Headstart, Public Health Departments, Social Service agencies, etc. We will also need information of what tests have been completed and names of medications for the child.

You should call Social Security to make an appointment to apply for SSI. The earlier the better because the date of the telephone call is the date used for any retroactive benefits. Call 800-772-1213 anytime from 7AM to 7PM business days to make an appointment.

A large part of the application can be completed on the internet prior to the appointment. The Child Disability Report is required for the application process and can be completed by going to www.ssa.gov and clicking on Apply for Disability Benefits.

Once the interview is completed at the appointment the information is sent to the Utah State Disability Determination Services (DDS) for the disability decision. This decision takes about 4 months. If the claim is approved the SSI benefit is retroactive to the first date of contact with Social Security. If the claim is denied you have 60 days to request an appeal.

Other Information

SSI does not provide medical assistance; it only provides a monthly check. But eligibility to SSI provides eligibility to Medicaid which does provide other medical assistance and programs.

The child must be a US citizen to qualify for SSI and live in the United States.

If the child is in a medical facility for more than 30 days the parents' income and resources do not count. The monthly SSI amount is limited to \$30 for those months the child is in the medical facility.

Certain medical conditions permit immediate SSI payments for up to 6 months while we wait for the decision from DDS. Those conditions are: HIV infection, total blindness, total deafness, cerebral palsy, Down syndrome, muscular dystrophy, and birth weight below two pounds and 10 ounces.