

Child Supplemental Security Income Fact Sheet

Introduction

Child Supplemental Security Income (SSI) is a benefit for children under the age of 18 who are disabled and have limited income and resources.

In Arkansas, children who are eligible for this benefit will receive up to \$783 per month. The Social Security Administration (SSA) can change this amount each year. Any child who receives SSI automatically gets Medicaid.

Eligibility

Someone under the age of 18 can get disability benefits through the SSI program. SSI is for people who are both disabled and have limited income.

The SSA will look at all income and resources that a child has. This can include the income and resources of the family members who live with the child. If a child has no income or resources of their own, the child may still not be eligible to receive SSI because their parents make over a certain amount of money or own certain property.

Once income requirements are met, the SSA will find that a child is eligible for SSI. The child must have a medically-proven physical or mental disability that either results in death or causes marked or severe functional limitations for at least 12 months.

Disability Listings

The SSA has a list of specific conditions that will automatically qualify a child as disabled, as long as the condition is severe enough. Severe enough is determined by SSA requirements.

Some of these conditions include:

- vision loss
- hearing loss
- epilepsy
- cerebral palsy
- a brain tumor
- muscular dystrophy
- a birth weight less than 2 pounds, 10 ounces
- kidney disease

- autism
- mental retardation
- anxiety
- psoriasis

If the child does not meet the exact listing requirements, then the child might still qualify for SSI. If the child's disability has a marked or severe effect on certain areas of the child's everyday life, then the child can still qualify.

Severe and marked limitations mean that the child's disability is so bad that it interferes with the child's everyday life. Everyday life is compared to other children who are the same age but do not have a disability.

Effects on Everyday Life

The SSA will consider how the child's condition affects six areas in the child's life. To be eligible for benefits, the child's condition has to either be severe in two areas or be extremely severe in one area.

The SSA will look at specific things depending on the child's age. General things that are looked at in each area are as follows.

Getting or Using Information

The SSA will consider how well the child gets or learns information. They will also see how well the child uses information to learn to read, write, do math, and understand new information.

Attending and Completing Tasks

The SSA will consider how well the child focuses and maintains focus. They will also look at how well the child begins, carries through with, and finishes activities. They will see how long it takes the child to do activities and how easily the child can concentrate on these activities.

Interacting and Relating with Others

The SSA will consider how well the child starts and keeps relationships with other people. These people can include adults or other children. The SSA will also look at how well the child cooperates with others, follows directions, responds to criticism, and takes care of other people's belongings.

Moving About and Using Objects

The SSA will consider how well the child moves from one place to another. The SSA will also consider how well the child can move objects. Specific things the SSA will look at are how well the child can raise their arms and legs, kneel, crawl, walk, run, and carry objects.

Caring for Self

The SSA will consider how well a child can take on their emotional and physical needs, belongings, and living areas. The SSA will look at how the child deals with stress and change.

Health and Physical Well-Being

The SSA will consider the conditions a child has and the effects they have on the child. The SSA will look at treatments or therapies the child participates in.

Severity of Disability

The SSA will look at how the child acts at home, in school, and in social settings. This information will be used to see how the child can act when alone and whether the child is at an appropriate level compared to other non-disabled children of the same age.

The SSA will also decide using the child's medical records, school records, and standardized test scores. They will talk to the child's doctors, teachers, therapists, and other people who might have information about the child's condition.

If Approved: After Approval

The SSA will review the child's condition from time to time to make sure that the child still has a disability.

If the child's condition is expected to improve, then the SSA will review the child's condition every 3 years. If the child was receiving SSI because of the child's low birth weight, then the SSA will review the child's condition when the child turns one year old. There might not be a review if the SSA decides that the child's condition will not improve.

The SSA must review the child's condition when the child turns 18 years old. This review will help determine if the child meets the adult standards to continue SSI benefits.

SSA Interviews

You will have to present evidence to SSA to show the child's current condition. Evidence can include medical records, evaluations, and school records. This information can also be used to show that the child is getting treatment that is needed for the child's condition.

Automatically Getting SSI as an Adult

A child is an adult when they turn 18 years old. When a child becomes an adult, SSA will review the condition to see if the child qualifies for SSI benefits based on the adult rules. Different rules are used to decide if a person can get SSI benefits as an adult.

Applying

Call the SSA at 1-800-772-1213. You can also apply in person by visiting your local Social Security office. When applying for Child SSI, make sure that you have the child's Social Security number and birth certificate. You will have to give these to SSA.

For more information, visit ssa.gov/disabilityssi.

This fact sheet is a collaboration of the Center for Arkansas Legal Services and Legal Aid of Arkansas, Inc. These nonprofit organizations provide free legal assistance to eligible Arkansans who meet income, asset, and other guidelines. Legal assistance may also include advice and counsel, brief services, or full representation depending on the situation. For more information about civil legal aid in Arkansas, please visit arlegalservices.org. For information specific to Legal Aid of Arkansas, Inc., visit arlegalaid.org. Apply for services online or by calling 1-800-9-LAW-AID (1-800-952-9243).

The information and statements of law in this fact sheet should not be considered legal advice. This fact sheet is provided as a broad guide to help you understand how certain legal matters are handled in general. Courts may interpret the law differently. Before you take action, talk to an attorney and follow his or her advice. Always do what the court tells you to do.

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