

Supplemental Security Income and Children with Disabilities

What is SSI?

Supplemental Security Income (SSI) is a publicly funded program, run by the federal Social Security Administration, that provides monthly income to a child or adult who has limited income, limited assets or resources and is disabled, blind or elderly.

Is there an age limit for a child to be eligible for SSI?

There is no minimum age, so a child may be eligible beginning as early as their date of birth. They can remain eligible until their 18th birthday. When a child turns 18, a new medical review will need to be completed and the adult medical criteria must be met in order to remain eligible for SSI.

What income and assets are considered when deciding if a child is eligible?

If a child lives at home with parents who do not receive SSI benefits, a child may be eligible for SSI benefits (monthly income) depending on the child's income and a portion of their parent's income and other resources. Social Security calls the portion of parent's income "deemed income." Some of the family's resources are not counted against benefits, including one car and your home. More specific information on income and resources is available on the Social Security website at www.ssa.gov/ssi/text-resources-ussi.htm

What criteria does Social Security use to decide if my child is eligible?

- A child must have a physical or mental impairment (or combination) that results in a **marked and severe limitation** in functioning, and
- The condition must have lasted (or be expected to last) for **one full year** or be expected to result in death.
- If a child is blind, they must meet the statutory definition of blindness - see the complete details at www.ssa.gov/ssi/text-eligibility-ussi.htm#blind

Can I see what kinds of disabilities/impairments they consider?

Yes, the Social Security Administration publishes and periodically updates their "**Blue Book**" that lists all disability categories, including descriptions for children. Keep in mind, this is for professionals so it is technical, but it may also be helpful for families to get an idea of the types of conditions they consider. The SSA Blue Book listing of childhood impairments is available at www.ssa.gov/disability/professionals/bluebook/ChildhoodListings.htm



How do I Apply for SSI for my Child?

Go to the Social Security website and review the *Child Disability Starter Kit*. The kit answers common questions about applying and includes a worksheet that will help you gather the information you need. The kit can be found at ssa.gov/disability/disability_starter_kits_child_eng.htm

You will need to complete an application for SSI and a *Child Disability Report*. The report collects information about the child's disabling condition and how it affects their ability to function. Both the application and the *Child Disability Report* are available on the Social Security website, however, only the Disability Report can be completed online. You will also be asked to sign a form that gives your child's health providers permission to give Social Security information about his/her disability.

Next, call Social Security at **1-800-772-1213** to schedule an appointment to complete the application. They will help you in person or by telephone. Please DO NOT go to a local office without an appointment – you may have to wait over an hour or will be given an appointment on another day.

What Is the Process for Deciding if my Child is Disabled?

The Disability Determination Bureau, within the Wisconsin Department of Health Services, is responsible for making the medical decision for Wisconsin residents applying for SSI. After you have filed the SSI application with Social Security and they have found your child eligible for the non-medical requirements (your income and resources are not too high for eligibility), the Disability Determination Bureau will collect medical evidence from your child's doctors, therapists, hospitals and school.

Disability examiners and medical professionals evaluate the information to decide if your child is disabled based on the Social Security Administration's definition of disability.

Keep in mind that this review is not the same as the review for determining if your child is eligible for Wisconsin's long-term support waivers (CLTS), for Medicaid through the Katie Beckett Program or CCOP. Your child may not be eligible for SSI but may qualify for these other programs.

If My Child Is Eligible for SSI will they also get Medicaid coverage?

Yes! One of the important benefits of receiving SSI in Wisconsin is that your child will have health care coverage through Wisconsin Medicaid. Medicaid covers doctor and hospital visits, therapy visits, prescription medications, diapers (for children age 4 and older), personal care services and many other medically necessary services. (See the Family Voices fact sheets at fvofwi.org for more details on Medicaid benefits for children with special needs.)

****If your child is not eligible for SSI, they may still be eligible for Wisconsin Medicaid through other doorways. If your child was denied because your family's income was too high, your child may qualify for Medicaid through the Katie Beckett Program. Go to dhs.wisconsin.gov/children/kbp/index.htm**

If you have more questions about SSI, go to the Social Security Administration's website at www.socialsecurity.gov/ or call **1-800-772-1213**

If you have questions or need help finding services contact your Regional Center for Children and Youth with Special Health Care Needs. To find the Regional Center closest to you call **1-800-642-7837**.