

# What You Should Know When You Apply For SSI Disability Benefits For Your Child

Children from birth up to age 18 may get Supplemental Security Income (SSI) benefits. They must be disabled and they must have low income and few resources. Here are answers to some questions people ask about applying for SSI for children.



**Q:** How does Social Security decide if my child is disabled?

Social Security has a strict definition of disability for children. A child is disabled if:

- He or she has a physical or mental condition(s) that very seriously limits his or her activities; and
- The condition(s) has lasted, or is expected to last, at least 1 year or is expected to result in death.

An agency in your state makes the disability decision for us. They review the information you give us. They will also ask for information from medical and school sources and other people who know about your child. If the state agency needs more information, they will arrange an examination or test for your child, which we will pay for.



**Q:** How does Social Security decide if my child can get SSI?

Besides being disabled, your child must have little income and resources to be eligible. We also consider the family's household income, resources and other personal information.



**Q:** How can I get ready for the disability interview?

- Make sure you have as much of the information listed on the pink checklist as possible. Have the information with you for your interview.
- If you have access to the Internet, you can fill out a Child Disability Report online. Log on to [www.socialsecurity.gov/childdisabilityreport](http://www.socialsecurity.gov/childdisabilityreport)
- The blue medical and school worksheet can help you complete the Disability Report on the Internet or help you get ready for your interview.

Keep your appointment even if you do not have all the information listed on the pink checklist. We will help you get the information we need.



**Q:** How will I know what Social Security has decided?

It can take 3 to 5 months to decide a child's SSI disability claim. We will send you a letter telling you what we decided.

If we approve your child's claim, the letter will show the payment amount and start date.

If we do not approve your child's claim, the letter will explain why. The letter will also tell you how you can appeal our decision if you do not agree. It is easy to appeal. If you decide to appeal, contact us.

If you want more information, check our website, [www.socialsecurity.gov/disability](http://www.socialsecurity.gov/disability), or call us at **1-800-772-1213** between 7 a.m. and 7 p.m. on business days with specific questions and any time for general information. People who are deaf or hard of hearing may call our toll-free TTY number, **1-800-325-0778**.

# Other Important Information

## If You Are More Comfortable Speaking In A Language Other Than English

We provide free interpreter service on request to conduct your Social Security business. This service is available when you talk to us by phone or in a Social Security office.

## State And Local Medical Assistance

SSI is not a medical assistance program. Your state Medicaid agency, local health department, social services office or hospital can help you find your nearest health care agencies. Your Social Security office can also help you find health care agencies.

### Medicaid

Medicaid is a health care program for people with low incomes and limited assets. In most states, children who get SSI benefits can also get Medicaid. Even if your child cannot get SSI, he or she may be able to get Medicaid. Your state Medicaid agency, your local Social Security office or your state or county social services office can give you more information.

### State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP)

Your child may be able to get health insurance from the State Children's Health Insurance Program, even if he or she does not get SSI. SCHIP provides health insurance to children from working families with incomes too high to get Medicaid, but who cannot afford private health insurance. SCHIP provides insurance for prescription drugs and for vision, hearing and mental health services in all 50 states and the District of Columbia. Your state Medicaid agency can provide more information about SCHIP. You can also go to [www.cms.hhs.gov/schip](http://www.cms.hhs.gov/schip) or make a free phone call to **1-877-KIDS-NOW (1-877-543-7669)** for more information on your state's program.

### Other Health Care Services

If your child is under age 16 and we decide he or she is disabled and can get SSI, we will refer him or her to your state children's agencies for social, developmental, educational and medical services. Even if your child cannot get SSI, these state agencies may be able to help him or her.

## Work For Young People Who Are Getting SSI

As children approach the age to work, we have many ways to encourage those who get SSI disability benefits to go to work:

- We do not count most of your child's earnings when we figure the SSI payment. We count even less of your child's earnings if he or she is a student.
- We deduct the cost of certain items and services that your child needs to work from his or her earnings to figure the SSI payment.
- If your child is age 15 or older, he or she can establish a Plan to Achieve Self-Support (PASS). With a PASS, your child can set aside income for a work goal. We will not count this income when we figure the SSI payment.
- Your child's Medicaid coverage can continue even if his or her earnings are high enough to stop SSI payments, as long as the earnings are under a certain amount.

Your local Social Security office can provide more information about these work incentives. You can also find answers to many questions on our Work website, [www.socialsecurity.gov/work](http://www.socialsecurity.gov/work).

## Your Privacy Is Protected

The Social Security Administration protects the privacy of those we serve. Our first regulation was written to ensure your privacy. As a federal agency, we are required by the Privacy Act of 1974 (5 U.S.C. 522a) to protect the information we get from you.