

MAKING IT HAPPEN

Supplemental Security Income (SSI) is a federal Social Security Administration (SSA) program that provides monthly checks to people who are elderly, blind and/or disabled, and who have very little income or resources. Not all HRC clients are eligible for SSI. This benefit is provided to children who meet the qualifications at right, to provide financial assistance with the child's living expenses.

IS MY CHILD ELIGIBLE FOR SSI? A Guide for Parents and Caregivers

Children with disabilities do not automatically qualify for SSI.

Your child must:

- Be a **U. S. citizen** or legal U.S. resident, or be given special refugee or asylum status.
- Have a **disability** that is considered **severe** (this may include a physical, developmental, or mental health condition); and
- Be in a family that has **limited income/resources** (unless the child lives in a licensed home, not with you).

How Does My Family Income Apply to My Child?

The Social Security Administration (SSA) considers a child to be any person who is under the age of 18.

If your child lives at home with you, and you do not receive SSI payments yourselves, the SSA will count your income and resources as available to the child. SSA has guidelines for the size of the family and the amount of gross monthly income which parents may earn or receive and still have their child qualify for SSI benefits. You may check with SSA or your regional center Service Coordinator to ask about this.

What Will the Social Security Administration Ask About My Child's Disability?

The SSA will ask you:

- What is your child's disability and how long has he/she had it?
- What kind of medical treatments or therapies has your child received and what medications does he/she take?
- What doctors, hospitals and clinics have cared for your child, along with the dates your child was seen there, so that they can obtain records.
- What schools your child has attended, along with any reports about medical conditions, special education services, or extended absences.

You may ask your Harbor Regional Center Service Coordinator to send a copy of developmental or psychological, or nursing assessments

You may also ask your doctors to send medical reports and documentation to the Social Security Administration to support your SSI application.

Once My Child Receives SSI Benefits, Will They Always Continue?

SSA may periodically re-evaluate your child's condition or disability. The type of disability your child has may influence how often the SSA will re-evaluate his/her situation. If SSA determines your child's condition has improved or your family's financial situation has changed, SSA may decide to stop SSI benefits. If that happens, be sure to let your HRC Service Coordinator know. You may **appeal** if SSA tells you benefits will be terminated.

When your child turns age 18, he or she will be re-evaluated for continuing benefits as an adult. SSA does not count your family income for applicants who are adults, even if your adult child continues to live with you. Where your adult child lives may be a factor in the amount of SSI he or she receives.

To start the application process, you may want to visit the Social Security Administration website at <https://www.ssa.gov/disability> (search for their Child Disability Starter Kit), or call their toll-free telephone number at **1-800/772-1213**.

For more detailed information about SSI, please refer to the HRC booklet *Making It Happen, Supplemental Security Income Benefits*.



