



Fact Sheet

SOCIAL SECURITY

Supplemental Security Income (SSI) Child Recipient Fact Sheet

Children with marked and severe functional limitations that have lasted, or are expected to last, for 12 months or result in death may qualify for SSI payments provided their families meet strict resource and income limits.

- A small percentage of children in the United States receive SSI. About 1.3 million children receive SSI, out of the total 74 million children in the United States —approximately 1.8 percent.¹
- The SSI program for children is small compared with other programs administered by the Social Security Administration. There are about 63 million beneficiaries and recipients of Social Security and SSI payments, compared to just 1.3 million SSI children (only about 2 percent of those receiving benefits.)²
- Annual payments for SSI children total about \$10.5 billion compared to over \$840 billion for all Social Security and SSI benefits combined—about 1.2 percent of total payments.³
- Children on SSI typically live in families that have total family income below or near the federal poverty standard.
 - 32 percent of them are in poverty.
 - 58 percent have incomes below 150 percent of the poverty standard.⁴
- If disability benefits were not included, the poverty rate for these children would increase from 32 percent to 58 percent. An additional 340 thousand children would live in poverty.⁵

1 <http://www.childstats.gov/americaschildren/tables/pop1.asp>

2 Social Security Administration. Annual Statistical Supplement, 2012.

3 Social Security Administration. Annual Statistical Supplement, 2012.

4 Estimates are based on the Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP) merged with Social Security Administration data from 2010. Social Security disability benefits include disabled worker, disabled widow(er), and disabled adult child benefits. For additional information on data and methods, please see: <http://www.ssa.gov/policy/docs/rsnotes/rsn2014-02.html>

5 Estimates based on Survey of Income and Program participation merged with Social Security Administration data from 2010. Social Security disability benefits include disabled worker, disabled widow(er), and disabled adult child beneficiaries. For additional information on data and methods, see <http://www.ssa.gov/policy/docs/rsnotes/rsn2014-02.html>.

6 Estimates based on Survey of Income and Program participation merged with Social Security Administration data from 2010. Social Security disability benefits include disabled worker, disabled widow(er), and disabled adult child beneficiaries. For additional information on data and methods, see <http://www.ssa.gov/policy/docs/rsnotes/rsn2014-02.html>.

7 Unpublished

- The large majority of children on SSI are the sole recipients of SSI benefits in the household. It is comparatively rare to find numerous children from one household receiving SSI payments. In 2010 (the last year for which data are available), about 925,000 SSI children were the sole child recipients in their household, while only about 269,000 recipients (23 percent) were in households with more than one child receiving SSI.⁶
- In those families with more than one child receiving SSI, most of the children have different medical diagnoses, with intellectual disabilities, not ADHD, the most common diagnosis.⁷
- The Social Security Administration has an active research program to strengthen the SSI program for children and help children who receive SSI successfully transition to adulthood, including such projects as:
 - The Youth Transition Demonstration Project, which tested ways to help young people aged 14-25 with disabilities to successfully make the transition from school to economic self-sufficiency. <http://ssa.gov/disabilityresearch/youth.htm>
 - The Promoting Readiness of Minors in SSI (PROMISE) project, in which we are working with several Federal and State agencies to evaluate programs designed to facilitate positive changes in: health status; physical and emotional development; completion of education and training; and, eventually, employment opportunities. <http://ssa.gov/disabilityresearch/projects.htm#promise>
 - Working with the National Academy of Sciences (NAS) Institute of Medicine (IOM) to evaluate the SSI program for children and determine the effectiveness of the disability adjudication process for children based on current trends in child health and development, and in pediatric and adolescent medicine. IOM will focus their initial efforts on ADHD and speech and language delays.

⁵ Estimates based on Survey of Income and Program participation merged with Social Security Administration data from 2010. Social Security disability benefits include disabled worker, disabled widow(er), and disabled adult child

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⁶ Estimates based on Survey of Income and Program participation merged with Social Security Administration data from 2010. Social Security disability benefits include disabled worker, disabled widow(er), and disabled adult child beneficiaries. For additional information on data and methods, see <http://www.ssa.gov/policy/docs/rsnotes/rsn2014-02.html>.

⁷ Unpublished estimates based on matched administrative and survey data for the year 2005. For more information, see <http://ssa.gov/policy/docs/ssb/v73n3/v73n3p11.html> or Nicholas, Joyce. 2013. "Prevalence, Characteristics, and Poverty Status of Supplemental Security Income Recipients." *Social Security Bulletin*, 73(3): 11-21.