



# SSI Extra Help for Children with Extra Needs

## 1. What is SSI?

SSI stands for Supplemental Security Income. This is a program for people who are poor and have disabilities or are elderly. If they meet the rules, they get a payment of up to \$721 a month from Social Security. They also get TennCare.

## 2. How can a child be disabled?

SSI says a child is disabled **IF:**

- They have an illness or injury **AND**
- The illness or injury leaves them far behind other children their age



The SSI rules are hard to understand. Most parents can't tell for sure if their child will meet the rules. Most of the time, children who meet SSI rules:

- Need extra medical care **or**
- Can't do things other children their age can do

## 3. How can a parent find out if a child can get SSI?

The only way to find out for sure if a child meets SSI rules is to apply. Apply by calling Social Security at **1-800-772-1213**. After the call, Social Security will decide if your child is poor enough to get SSI. Social Security will get the child's medical and school records. Then they will decide if the child's health problems meet the SSI rules.

Doctors and teachers may know about the SSI rules. You might ask your child's doctor or teacher if you should apply for SSI.

## 4. What if my child is turned down for SSI?

You need to appeal. An appeal means they will look at the facts about your child again. You have to appeal within 65 days. Look at the letter you got from Social Security turning your child down for SSI. The 65 days start on the date on that letter.

Call the Legal Aid Society at **1-800-238-1443** as soon as you get the letter. We will try to find a private lawyer who will appeal for you. You only pay the lawyer if your child gets SSI. What if you don't get a lawyer right away and are worried time will run out? Appeal on your own. The letter from Social Security tells you how to appeal.



## 5. How can I find out more?

Legal Aid lawyers will speak to groups of parents about SSI for children. We can explain the program and answer questions. If you would like a speaker, please call our Community Education staff at **615-244-6610**.

This booklet is not meant to take the place of legal advice. Each case is different and needs individual attention. 8/14



**Legal Aid Society**  
of Middle Tennessee & the Cumberland

Working Together. Doing Justice. Restoring Hope.

**1-800-238-1443**

It's a free call.

On the internet at **www.las.org**