Applying for SSI for a child after diagnostic testing

Autism and other developmental or mental conditions may qualify a child for SSI. A diagnosis alone does not decide the claim. SSA considers whether a medically documented condition causes marked and severe functional limitations and has lasted, or is expected to last, at least 12 months. It also reviews the child's and, in many households, parents' income and resources.

1 Gather child focused evidence

Collect the testing report and treatment history. List doctors, therapists, medications, school or daycare contacts, teacher observations, IEP or 504 plan, evaluations, and therapies. Give examples of communication, learning, social interaction, behavior, self-care, safety, and support needs compared with children the same age. A child's job history is not required.

2 Start the SSI application with Social Security

Call 1-800-772-1213 (TTY 1-800-325-0778) for a child SSI appointment, or begin at ssa.gov/apply/ssi. The Child Disability Report at ssa.gov/childdisabilityreport can be completed online, but it is not the SSI application. Ask how SSA will complete the application and protect the filing date. Do not wait for every record.

3 Provide financial information and follow the claim

Be ready to discuss household finances and living arrangements. SSA may count part of a parent's or stepparent's income and resources for a child under 18 living at home. Respond to school and medical record requests and any examination. If denied, request reconsideration within 60 days after receiving the notice. At 18, SSA uses adult disability rules.

Start other supports while the claim is pending

Birth to 3: Ask Texas ECI for a developmental evaluation. Age 3 and up: request a special education evaluation from the school district serving your address; SPEDTex explains parent rights. These routes do not require SSI approval.

Health and family support: Explore Medicaid/CHIP, SNAP, TANF, WIC and support services at YourTexasBenefits.com/Learn/Home. NavigateLifeTexas.org/en explains waivers, respite, school services and family support. Contact the county IDD authority about services and waiver interest lists; see the companion Resource Guide.

Child starter kit: ssa.gov/disability/disability_starter_kits.htm • SSA child SSI: ssa.gov/ssi/text-child-ussi.htm. Your Texas Benefits does not file an SSI application. General information; approval is not guaranteed.