

# Federal benefits are only received by some qualifying children

Children with certain mental health conditions who have a family situation that meets specific criteria can qualify for Supplemental Security Income and other federal benefits. A study that has been released notes that many children who are likely eligible for these benefits and who fall into the low-income category aren't getting the benefits.

The report looked at the SSI program. In 2012, payments to children totaled around 20 percent of the total SSI payouts or around \$9.9 billion. The study found that many children who have conditions that would make them eligible for SSI benefits don't receive them.

For example, only 20 to 50 percent of children with autism spectrum disorder who are potentially low-income receive the benefits. Only around 4 percent of children who have been diagnosed with oppositional defiant disorder or conduct disorder who might have been eligible for these benefits received them during 2011 and 2012.

In 2013, around 1.3 million children received benefits for SSI. Around half of those children were tied to a mental health disorder. The [American Academy of Pediatrics](#) has a policy in effect that aims to have pediatricians let patients know about SSI. The policy also calls for pediatricians to help the families apply for benefits.

The financial benefits from SSI can help children who live in poverty to have improved outcomes. This shows how important SSI can be to the families who need the financial help. The SSI funds can help them to cover the additional costs associated with raising a child with a mental health disorder.

Not all children who qualify for benefits will be approved at first. In some cases, you will have to appeal decisions related to SSI. Whether you are completing an initial application or an appeal, it is important for you to understand the entire process so you can learn how to proceed.