

What is SSI?

Supplemental Security Income (SSI) provides monthly payments from the U.S. Treasury to qualifying persons with disabilities. Payments are made to persons who have limited income and resources and who meet living arrangement requirements. Social Security follows rules and policies and reviews recipients' disabilities periodically to ensure they meet program requirements. Until a child turns 18, Social Security considers the income and resources of family members who are a part of your household with regard to program income requirements. If your child qualifies, Social Security assigns a representative payee (parent, family member, or other caregiver) to help manage the money and pay for basic living expenses and needs.

After the child turns 18, Social Security reviews the child's disability, and only the child's income and resources. The adult definition of disability is based on one's ability to work. Sometimes people who qualified for SSI payments under the children's rules do not meet the rules and policies of the adult program. Be sure to give Social Security any requested information about your child's medical condition and doctors who have treated their disability. On the other hand, the adult rules consider only the child's income and resources, not those of others in the household. Even if the child could not receive SSI payments before their 18th birthday because the family made too much money, they may now qualify as an adult.

If Social Security makes a decision about SSI payments that you do not agree with, you can appeal through several levels in the agency and the federal district court.

SSI is to be used to pay the costs of food, clothing, and shelter for the recipient. If your child is living with you and is approved for SSI after they turn 18, the SSI check will be reduced by one-third unless they are paying living expenses. The amount of living expenses does need to be a fair amount, one that a parent would charge for anyone who may rent a room in their household. A rental agreement between the parent and child should be developed and provided to the Social Security Administration (SSA). SSA web-site: <https://www.ssa.gov>



Center for Disabilities Deaf-Blind Program Sanford School of Medicine

- ⇒ Provides technical assistance, training and resources to families and service providers (birth to 21) with varying levels of both hearing and vision loss. Services aim at improving educational outcomes for children of all ages in order to help prepare them for transition into adulthood. Services are free.
- ⇒ **Website:** <https://www.usd.edu/medicine/center-for-disabilities/deaf-blind-program>



SD National Deaf Blind Equipment Distribution Program

- ⇒ The National Deaf Blind Equipment Distribution Program (NDBEDP) is a program established by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) to distribute a wide array of assistive technology to people who are deaf-blind and require special equipment to make a phone call, send an email or access the Internet.
- ⇒ **Website:** <https://dhs.sd.gov/servicetotheblind/BEDP.aspx>

Final Thoughts

- ✓ Help your child understand their disability. Share information with your child about others with disabilities who have achieved success in their lives!
- ✓ You and your child should take a leadership role in planning and implementing their transition IEP.
- ✓ Communication is essential - you and your child's IEP team need to begin the transition to post-secondary services early!
- ✓ Involve your teen in completing ordinary tasks in your home.
- ✓ Make your child's school responsibilities (homework, projects) theirs, not yours.
- ✓ Visit and share with other parents who are in the transition stage for their child!



Transition Services Liaison Project

www.tslp.org

Black Hills Special Services Cooperative

Tips For Parents

Transition Services for Students with Vision Loss

"The only thing worse than being blind is having sight but no vision"
- Helen Keller

While in high school, your child should...

- ✓ Learn about their disability and be able to explain it.
- ✓ Complete a Low Vision Evaluation to learn about necessary adaptive tools and devices.
- ✓ Become involved in extra-curricular activities.
- ✓ Discuss strengths, challenges, and needed accommodations with their teachers.
- ✓ Actively participate in IEP meetings.
- ✓ Consider applying for services through Service to the Blind and Visually Impaired.
- ✓ Apply for Youth Leadership Forum (www.tslp.org) and SD Rehabilitation Center for the Blind Transition Week.
- ✓ Engage in volunteer work experiences.
- ✓ Develop career interests and participate in job shadowing.

If your child is going on to post-secondary schooling, they should also...

- ✓ Tour and visit with disability services at colleges of interest.
- ✓ Attend Catch the College Wave event (www.tslp.org).
- ✓ Address the possible need for assistive technology (AT) devices.
- ✓ Set high standards for themselves.
- ✓ Take ACT (American College Test) or ACCUPLACER exams early.

Did You Know?



Your child may be eligible to continue with special education services until the end of the school year following their 21st birthday.

If the IEP team, which must include you and your child, determines that a student will not meet the graduation requirements for a regular high school diploma or is in need of continued transition services, a new IEP can be developed for the next school year and services can continue. Many school districts in SD are developing and implementing creative educational opportunities for students who continue with special education services.



Need More Information?

- **American Foundation for the Blind:**
<https://www.afb.org/>
- **SD Service to the Blind and Visually Impaired:**
<https://dhs.sd.gov/servicetotheblind/Impaired>
- **Hadley Institute for the Blind:**
<https://hadley.edu/>
- **Helen Keller Services for the Blind:**
<https://www.helenkeller.org/hksb>
- **Transition Services Liaison Project:**
www.tslp.org

Employment Supports

There are a variety of vocational rehabilitation services that **Service to the Blind and Visually Impaired (SBVI)** can offer to students with disabilities. If your child hasn't applied for these services by age 16, or younger, if appropriate, please request the school to invite a SBVI counselor to meet with you and/or your child or attend an IEP meeting. SBVI vocational rehabilitation counselors are qualified to assist students with vision loss with a variety of services. Some services SBVI may provide (based on eligibility, financial need and individual needs) are:



- ✓ Guidance in transition planning;
- ✓ Financial assistance for college or training, when appropriate;
- ✓ Vocational counseling and guidance;
- ✓ Work experience through Project Skills and/or job placement, job coaching, and employment/follow along services for competitive employment in the community;
- ✓ Transportation, equipment and other services if needed for training;
- ✓ Low vision exam;
- ✓ Advocacy skills;
- ✓ Skills of blindness training, and
- ✓ Assessing the need for assistive technology equipment and services.

For information on the address and phone number of the SBVI office nearest you, go to <https://dhs.sd.gov/servicetothelblind/default.aspx> or call (605) 773-4644.

Encourage your Child to Attend a Transition Event with You!

TSLP provides regionally based events and activities for high school students with disabilities, their parents, educators, and adult agencies. These transition events and activities provide education and information for students to make a seamless transition from high school to the adult world of employment, education or training, and independent living.

Some of the events include:

- Let's Talk Work!
- Catch the College Wave
- Transition Forums
- Youth Leadership Forum (YLF)

The more educated students can become regarding their transition from high school, the further developed their advocacy skills become. Advocacy skills can lead to a better life for students if they can speak up for what they need.

More specific information on location and date can be found at www.tsllp.org/events.

The Law & Guardianship

It can be a particularly worrisome time if you question your child's ability to make important life decisions when they turn 18. Is full guardianship necessary or would a less restrictive option be more suitable for you and your child?

To learn about the pros, cons, and alternatives to guardianship or for more information, contact:

**SD Dept. of Human Services
Guardianship Program**
<https://dhs.sd.gov/guardianship/default.aspx>

Disability Rights South Dakota
2520 E. Franklin St. Ste 2
Pierre, SD 57501
(605)224-8294 or
1-800-658-4782
<https://drsdlaw.org>



Alternatives to Guardianship
www.tsllp.org/independent-living



SD Rehabilitation Center for the Blind

The Center provides pre-employment transition services during the summer months for transition-age students. Students receive individualized training in the skills of blindness classes and vocational training. Skills of blindness classes consist of the following: home management, orientation and mobility, communications, assistive technology, home mechanics, creative arts, and individual peer support.

SD Vocational Resources (SDVR) provides vocational assessments and training to help individuals with a variety of disabilities to find and engage in meaningful employment. SDVR has a certified brain injury specialist to access as a resource and support.

Low Vision Exams help people whose ability to function in everyday tasks has been compromised by impaired vision. Low vision services include a visual exam conducted by a trained low vision specialist, assessment of visual functioning of individual needs and goals, prescriptions for specialized low vision devices, and individualized training.

Address: 2900 W 11th St #101, Sioux Falls, SD, 57104

Phone: (605) 367-5260

Website: <https://dhs.sd.gov/servicetothelblind/sdrc.aspx>

Transition Week

The Rehabilitation Center provides a one-week employment-related event called Transition Week which occurs each June for students from across South Dakota.

During their time at Transition Week, students will participate in a variety of activities that promote

- ◆ Vocational learning,
- ◆ Career exploration,
- ◆ Social skills,
- ◆ Self-advocacy,
- ◆ Independence and
- ◆ Skills of blindness.



Students stay in dormitories at Augustana University to gain the experience of being on a college campus.

For more information, contact the SBVI transition specialist at 605-626-2995.



SD School for the Blind
and Visually Impaired

The South Dakota School for the Blind & Visually Impaired, located in Aberdeen, SD, serves approximately 250 students throughout the state, with approximately 25 of these students attending the on-campus program.

SDSBVI provides a

- 9-month school year, and
- 6 weeks of extended school year services to all on-campus and outreach students.

A Transition Specialist is available to assist students 14-21 years of age, their families, and school personnel in the developing and implementing an appropriate transition program at no cost to better prepare them for future employment and independent living. Also, Outreach Vision Consultants are located throughout the state, and begin working with students as early as Birth-3.

To learn more about SDSBVI and services provided, please contact 605-626-2580, or check out the website at: <https://sdsbvi.org>.

Opportunities for Your Child in the Adult Services System

Family Support 360: Program for people with developmental disabilities. These services will make it easier for people to live and work in the community. Contact the Division of Developmental Disabilities at 1-800-264-9684.

Independent Living Centers: Services to individuals with disabilities in the area of advocacy, information and referral, independent living skills and training and peer support. Contact an Independent Living Center at 1-800-265-9684.

DakotaLink: Assistance to individuals of all ages to acquire and use the latest available assistive technology devices that best meet the need to maintain independence at home, work, or in the classroom or leisure activities. Contact DakotaLink at 1-800-645-0673.

South Dakota Benefits Specialist Network: Advice and support on Social Security work incentives, Medicaid, Food Stamps, TANF, Housing Assistance and other disability related benefits. Contact SD Benefits Specialist Network at 605-224-5336.

A document listing **South Dakota Adult Agencies** with contact information can be found at: www.tsllp.org/adult-agency-involvement.