
Prepared by the Policy Surveillance Program Staff

November 2018
Federal Supplemental Security Income for Children with Disabilities

I. Date of Protocol: November 2018

II. Scope: Compile and analyze federal statutes and regulations related to key features of the Federal Supplemental Security Income (SSI) program for children with disabilities from January 1, 1996 through November 1, 2018. A concurrent project analyzed the optional state supplemental programs (SSP) during the same time period, to complement the federal data.

III. Primary Data Collection

a. Project dates: June 1, 2018 – April 2019

b. Dates covered in the dataset: January 1, 1996 through November 1, 2018. This dataset is longitudinal, analyzing statutes and regulations administering the Federal SSI program as they exist across time.

c. Data Collection Methods: The research team ("Team") building this dataset consisted of one project supervisor ("Supervisor"), three legal researchers from the Center for Public Health Law Research and one lawyer from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) ("Researchers").

Research was conducted by two Researchers, and any divergences were reviewed by the Supervisor and resolved by the Team.

d. Databases used: Research was conducted using WestlawNext, LexisNexis, and federal websites.

e. Search terms used:
   i. Supplemental Security Income (SSI)
   ii. SSI and children

f. Information about initial returns and additional inclusion or exclusion criteria:
   i. The following variables were included in the dataset:
      • Definition of an eligible child
      • Eligibility criteria
      • Program administration
      • Application requirements
      • Income exemptions
      • Income inclusions
• Minimum monthly benefit amounts

ii. The following variables were excluded from the dataset:
• Agencies responsible for administration
• Agreements between states governments and the federal government
• Interim payments
• Living arrangement requirements
• Laws or regulations that did not or could not potentially apply to children
• Laws or regulations pertaining to essential persons

IV. Coding

a. Development of Coding Questions: The Team worked collaboratively with partners from CDC, Division of Human Development and Disability, and ChangeLab Solutions to determine the scope of the research and to develop key questions to be coded. When the questions were finalized, the Researchers entered the questions into MonQcle, a software coding program. In addition, the Team consulted with these partners to discuss and refine the coding scheme throughout the life of the project.

Throughout the coding of the Federal record (a “record” refers to a set of code responses for each jurisdiction for each point in time included in the dataset), the Team frequently met as a group to narrow the scope of the dataset. As necessary, the coding scheme was altered to accommodate newly identified features of the law.

Citations to the relevant legal text were included whenever a question was answered in the affirmative. No citation was provided when the answer was “No” or where the law was silent on the question.

b. Coding Methods: Researchers coded responses based on objective, measurable aspects of the law. Caution Notes were provided to explain any unique regulations and/or where the law was unclear.

c. Coding Rules: Below is an explanation of the rules used when coding specific questions. Note that this section only includes questions and responses that required further explanation to understand how they were coded. Descriptions were not included below for questions and responses that were coded on their plain language or meaning alone.

Question 5: What types of ineligible parent income are included in the income calculation for SSI for children?

• Coded based on the rules for deeming income from an ineligible parent to an eligible child living with their parents.
Question 6. What types of ineligible income are exempt from the income calculation for SSI for children?

- Coded based on the rules for deeming income from an ineligible parent to an eligible child living with their parents.
- Allocations for non-parent ineligible family members, and other non-parent individuals living in the housed, were not included.

Question 7. What is the maximum monthly benefit rate for an eligible individual?

- Coded based on the federal benefit rate for an SSI-eligible individual, as this amount is subtracted from an ineligible parent’s income as part of the deeming of income to an eligible child.

Question 8. What is the maximum monthly benefit rate for an eligible couple?

- Coded based on the benefit rate for an SSI-eligible couple, as this amount is subtracted from an ineligible parents’ income as part of the deeming of income to an eligible child.

V. Quality Control

a. Background Research: The research showed that the Federal government has steadily offered an SSI program for children throughout the project dates.

b. Original Coding: Quality control consisted of the Supervisor exporting the data into a Microsoft Excel document as the Researchers completed coding to examine the data for any missing responses, citations, and Caution Notes.

c. Redundant coding: The redundant coding process entails independent, redundant coding by two Researchers. Redundant coding means that each record is assigned and coded independently by the two Researchers. Redundant coding was only conducted for the first and last record to capture all substantive changes in the law. Divergences, or differences between the original coding and redundant coding, were resolved through consultation and discussion with subject matter experts and the Team.

Quality control of the redundant coding consisted of the Supervisor exporting the data into a Microsoft Excel document each day the Researchers completed redundant coding to calculate divergence rates.

i. Divergence rate: The rate of divergence was 6.9%

d. Final Data Check: Prior to publication, the Supervisor downloaded all coding data into Microsoft Excel to do a final review of coding answers, statutory and regulatory citations, and caution notes. All unnecessary caution notes were deleted and all necessary caution notes were edited for publication. Any
responses which were inconsistent with the project’s coding rules were updated. Any missing citations were added.