

Children Receiving Cash Benefits: SSI

Definition

Children receiving Supplemental Security Income is the number of children with disabilities whose families received cash assistance through Supplemental Security Income (SSI).

Data in context

All children need adequate economic resources to meet basic needs. Caring for a child with a physical or mental disability can impose a severe financial burden on a low-income family. Monthly SSI payments help vulnerable families of disabled children meet some of the added disability-related costs, such as lost wages due to having to remain home to care for the child, higher child care costs, and home modifications.¹ SSI ensures that low-income families are able to care for their disabled children in their own homes.²

Any child under the age of 18 may be considered disabled if the child has a physical or mental condition or a combination of conditions, resulting in “marked and severe functional limitations” and if the condition is medically determined to be at least 12 months in duration or to result in death.³ Some children will continue to receive benefits as adults if their disabilities prevent them from working.⁴

Even though the Social Security Administration administers the program, U.S. Treasury general funds, not the Social Security trust funds, finance SSI. Income security programs directed to children, as well as tax programs (such as the dependent care credit) have declined as a portion of federal spending on children over the past four decades as spending on education, health, and nutrition programs has increased.

States can let the federal government manage their SSI allotment, though Kentucky is among several states that manage their own. This means that individuals must apply directly to Kentucky through the Cabinet



for Health and Family Services, Department for Community Based Services.

National data show that boys are more likely to receive SSI than girls.⁵ Of children receiving this funding, two-thirds of the children have mental disorders, including 18 percent with mental retardation.⁶ Approximately 22 percent of child recipients of SSI live with both parents, 66 percent of the children live with single parents, and the remaining 12 percent have other living arrangements, such as foster care, institutions, or with relatives.⁷

Disparate access to prenatal care among women of color contributes to higher rates of low-weight births,⁸ and babies born at low birthweight face a higher risk of developmental disabilities.⁹ These factors contribute to disproportionately high rates nationally of SSI receipt among youth of color.¹⁰

More than 1.1 million children nationally received SSI benefits in December 2007, approximately 16 percent of all SSI recipients.¹¹ More detailed data for December 2006 show child recipients received an average SSI payment of \$538 a month.¹² About 29 percent of child recipients in 2006 had reported income in addition to their SSI benefits, including earned

income, such as wages, or unearned income, such as child support.¹³

In Kentucky, nearly 29,000 children received SSI benefits in December 2007. SSI participation by children grew 28 percent from 2000 to 2007. In Bullitt, Hickman, and Spencer Counties, the number of participants more than doubled between 2000 and 2007. In total, 28 counties experienced greater than 50 percent growth in the number of children receiving SSI. Franklin County saw the largest decline in the number of participants, with a 15 percent drop from 2000 to 2007.

Data Source: U.S. Social Security Administration website.

- 1 Sweeney, E. and Fremstad, S. (2005). *Supplemental Security Income: Supporting People with Disabilities and the Elderly*. Center on Budget and Policy Priorities. Available at <http://www.cbpp.org>. Accessed September 2008.
- 2 Ibid.
- 3 Ibid.
- 4 Carasso, A., Steuerle, C. E., and Reynolds, G. (2007). *Kids' Share: How Children Fare in the Federal Budget*. Washington, D.C.: The Urban Institute.
- 5 Social Security Administration (2007). *Children Receiving SSI: 2006*. Available at <http://www.ssa.gov>. Accessed August 2008.
- 6 Ibid.
- 7 Ibid.
- 8 U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office on Women's Health. (2006). *Prenatal Care*. 4women.gov: The National Women's Health Information Center. Available at <http://www.4women.gov>. Accessed August 2008.
- 9 Reichman, N. (2005). "Low Birth Weight and School Readiness." *The Future of Children*, vol. 15, no. 1. Available at <http://www.futureofchildren.org>. Accessed September 2008.
- 10 Rupp, K., Davies, P., Newcomb, C., Iams, H., Becker, C., Mulpuru, S., Ressler, S., Romig, K., and Miller, B. (2005-2006). "A Profile of Children with Disabilities Receiving SSI: Highlights from the National Survey of SSI Children and Families." *Social Security Bulletin*, vol. 66, no. 2. Available at <http://www.ssa.gov>. Accessed September 2008.
- 11 Social Security Administration (2008). *Annual Report of the Supplemental Security Income Program*.
- 12 Social Security Administration (2007). *Children Receiving SSI: 2006*. Available at <http://www.ssa.gov>. Accessed August 2008.
- 13 Ibid.

Children receiving SSI (number of children)

	December 2000 Number	December 2007 Number
Kentucky	22,681	29,050
Adair	98	95
Allen	89	94
Anderson	47	80
Ballard	33	46
Barren	199	242
Bath	83	103
Bell	318	358
Boone	224	331
Bourbon	70	99
Boyd	302	349
Boyle	163	195
Bracken	44	61
Breathitt	265	276
Breckinridge	73	139
Bullitt	135	329
Butler	47	74
Caldwell	62	80
Calloway	91	141
Campbell	368	377
Carlisle	30	30
Carroll	59	59
Carter	153	238
Casey	81	106
Christian	434	598
Clark	149	200
Clay	414	420
Clinton	58	61
Crittenden	34	32
Cumberland	48	50
Daviess	556	712
Edmonson	43	54
Elliott	44	72
Estill	131	141
Fayette	919	1,241
Fleming	71	76
Floyd	492	600
Franklin	318	270
Fulton	93	94
Gallatin	37	36
Garrard	70	109

	December 2000 Number	December 2007 Number
Grant	99	158
Graves	234	325
Grayson	105	171
Green	46	63
Greenup	137	216
Hancock	36	35
Hardin	491	638
Harlan	377	355
Harrison	64	116
Hart	85	124
Henderson	226	337
Henry	56	105
Hickman	18	45
Hopkins	324	421
Jackson	115	118
Jefferson	3,970	5,472
Jessamine	129	254
Johnson	207	286
Kenton	616	823
Knott	197	173
Knox	344	419
LaRue	59	71
Laurel	319	410
Lawrence	113	157
Lee	72	107
Leslie	81	110
Letcher	226	229
Lewis	93	113
Lincoln	164	216
Livingston	30	47
Logan	98	124
Lyon	21	21
McCracken	354	447
McCreary	199	220
McLean	40	55
Madison	303	435
Magoffin	156	214
Marion	122	170
Marshall	80	117
Martin	179	198
Mason	88	106

	December 2000 Number	December 2007 Number
Meade	67	131
Menifee	65	83
Mercer	91	117
Metcalfe	67	69
Monroe	75	70
Montgomery	137	205
Morgan	85	129
Muhlenberg	223	286
Nelson	141	253
Nicholas	41	42
Ohio	161	171
Oldham	56	104
Owen	33	60
Owsley	69	66
Pendleton	54	97
Perry	335	332
Pike	543	571
Powell	86	168
Pulaski	412	424
Robertson	10	18
Rockcastle	92	115
Rowan	124	123
Russell	114	132
Scott	114	174
Shelby	85	163
Simpson	56	76
Spencer	20	49
Taylor	175	162
Todd	43	61
Trigg	47	60
Trimble	27	52
Union	83	117
Warren	424	534
Washington	49	67
Wayne	171	162
Webster	95	98
Whitley	383	407
Wolfe	138	136
Woodford	61	77