

Children Receiving SSI Payments, December 1991

by Lenna Kennedy*

In December 1991, almost 439,000 blind and disabled children were receiving Supplemental Security Income (SSI) payments. These children made up nearly 9 percent of the more than 5 million SSI recipients in December. By comparison, in December 1980, payments were made to almost 229,000 blind and disabled children (about 6 percent of the 4 million SSI recipients in that month) shown in table 1.

To be eligible for SSI payments as a child, an individual must be under age

18 (or under age 22 if he or she is a full-time student), unmarried, and must meet the applicable SSI disability, income, and resource criteria.

The tables in this note are based on the Supplemental Security Record (SSR), the main administrative data base for the SSI program. Table 1 is based on universe counts. Tables 2-4 are based on the basic SSI 10-percent sample file for December 1991, and represent the number of persons due to receive an SSI payment on January 1, 1992. Tables 5 and 6 are based on a 10-percent sample file of recipients whose records include ineligible spouses or parents.

Geographic Distribution and Average Payment

Over half (56 percent) of the children who received SSI payments lived in States within the Atlanta, Chicago, and Dallas regions. More than one out of three children lived in five States—California, New York, Texas, Pennsylvania, and Florida (table 2). This geographic distribution is about the same as that found among blind and disabled adult recipients in December 1991.

The average SSI payment amount due to child recipients on January 1, 1992, was \$387. This amount included

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Table 1.—Total number of SSI recipients: Number and percentage distribution of adults and children, by reason for eligibility, 1974-91

Month and year	Total	Aged		Blind and disabled			
				Adults		Children	
		Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
December:							
1974.....	3,996,064	2,285,909	57.2	1,639,188	41.0	70,849	1.8
1975.....	4,314,275	2,307,105	53.5	1,878,834	43.5	128,175	3.0
1976.....	4,235,939	2,147,697	50.7	1,935,064	45.7	153,128	3.6
1977.....	4,237,692	2,050,921	48.4	2,011,525	47.5	175,214	4.1
1978.....	4,216,925	1,967,900	46.7	2,051,507	48.6	197,499	4.7
1979.....	4,149,575	1,871,716	45.1	2,065,740	49.8	212,088	5.1
1980.....	4,142,017	1,807,776	43.6	2,105,616	50.8	228,588	5.5
1981.....	4,018,875	1,678,090	41.8	2,110,680	52.5	230,094	5.7
1982.....	3,857,590	1,548,741	40.1	2,079,685	53.9	229,151	5.9
1983.....	3,901,497	1,515,400	38.8	2,149,699	55.1	236,380	6.1
1984.....	4,029,333	1,530,287	38.0	2,250,404	55.9	248,633	6.2
1985.....	4,138,021	1,504,469	36.4	2,368,216	57.2	265,325	6.4
1986.....	4,269,184	1,473,428	34.5	2,515,604	58.9	280,137	6.6
1987.....	4,384,999	1,455,387	33.2	2,640,875	60.2	288,725	6.6
1988.....	4,463,869	1,433,420	32.1	2,740,038	61.4	290,256	6.5
1989.....	4,593,059	1,439,043	31.3	2,857,541	62.2	296,298	6.5
1990.....	4,817,127	1,454,041	30.2	3,022,725	62.7	340,230	7.1
1991.....	5,118,470	1,464,684	28.6	3,214,933	62.8	438,853	8.6

Table 2.—Number of children receiving SSI payments and average payment, by region and State, December 1991¹

Region and State	Number	Average payment	Region and State	Number	Average payment
Total.....	431,730	\$387	Dallas, total.....	62,380	\$365
Boston, total.....	14,870	399	Arkansas.....	8,060	358
Connecticut.....	2,840	377	Louisiana.....	16,820	366
Maine.....	1,280	368	New Mexico.....	3,280	373
Massachusetts.....	7,910	406	Oklahoma.....	5,540	364
New Hampshire.....	820	376	Texas.....	28,680	366
Rhode Island.....	1,320	425	Kansas City, total.....	18,690	361
Vermont.....	700	445	Iowa.....	3,910	338
New York, total.....	46,410	393	Kansas.....	3,110	331
New Jersey.....	9,890	393	Missouri.....	9,480	379
New York.....	36,520	393	Nebraska.....	2,190	366
Philadelphia, total.....	42,330	382	Denver, total.....	10,780	364
Delaware.....	1,070	335	Colorado.....	4,640	363
District of Columbia.....	1,370	380	Montana.....	1,260	388
Pennsylvania.....	21,440	398	North Dakota.....	650	339
Maryland.....	5,330	362	South Dakota.....	1,670	371
Virginia.....	9,050	362	Utah.....	2,050	359
West Virginia.....	4,070	383	Wyoming.....	510	344
Atlanta, total.....	100,550	371	San Francisco, total.....	46,100	472
Alabama.....	11,820	376	Arizona.....	5,320	381
Florida.....	22,120	374	California.....	38,900	490
Georgia.....	13,020	363	Hawaii.....	600	358
Kentucky.....	9,930	369	Nevada.....	1,230	372
Mississippi.....	11,440	378	Northern Mariana Islands.....	50	382
North Carolina.....	13,170	364	Seattle, total.....	11,150	370
South Carolina.....	7,920	371	Alaska.....	430	353
Tennessee.....	11,130	375	Idaho.....	1,650	344
Chicago, total.....	78,470	384	Oregon.....	3,450	356
Illinois.....	20,520	375	Washington.....	5,620	387
Indiana.....	9,470	362			
Michigan.....	14,930	397			
Minnesota.....	3,880	349			
Ohio.....	20,730	365			
Wisconsin.....	8,940	465			

¹ Totals shown in tables 2-4 are different from the total in table 1 for two reasons. Tables 2-4 are based on a 10-percent sample file, while table 1 is a universe count. Also, tables 2-4 include only those recipients who were due an SSI payment January 1, 1992, while table 1 includes all recipients who received a payment in December 1991.

federally administered State supplementation where applicable, but did not include any retroactive payments.

Demographic Characteristics

In December 1991, more than 60 percent of the children receiving SSI payments were age 12 or under; 21 percent were under age 6. About 28 percent, an estimated 119,000 children, were from ages 13 to 17 (table 3). Boys are more likely than girls to be SSI recipients, by about 3 to 2. This gender pattern is generally the same among adult disabled SSI recipients.

Seventy-five percent of child SSI recipients lived with their parent(s). Three percent of the entire study group were patients in a medical facility where more than half of the cost of their care was covered by the Medicaid program. An additional 18 percent lived in other types of hospitals, nursing homes, residential schools, foster care facilities, or independently.

Diagnosis

More than half (56 percent) of SSI children were disabled based on a mental disorder; 44 percent were mentally retarded (table 4). The only other diagnostic category with a sizable

percentage of child recipients was diseases of the nervous system and sense organs (19 percent), which included all of the approximately 8,000 blind children who received SSI payments.

Income

Less than 2 percent of SSI children had earnings in December 1991, not surprising in view of the age of this population (table 3). Almost half of the study group (45 percent) had some type of unearned income, but few of these children were receiving benefits from Social Security (8 percent) or pension or compensation payments from the

Department of Veterans Affairs (less than 1 percent). These two entities provide the cash income most frequently received by the overall SSI population. What the child

recipients typically received was assistance based on need, child support, and/or income deemed from the parent(s) with whom they live.

Table 5 presents information on the

type of income received by those children whose records include information on their parent(s). In most cases this information is collected for children under age 18 who live with their parent(s) and is compiled for the purpose of determining whether "deeming" of income and/or resources from parent to child should apply.

In December 1991, an estimated 333,550 children receiving SSI payments were living with one or two ineligible parents, and thus subject to deeming of income. Almost two out of three (63 percent) of these children lived with one parent, and 37 percent lived with two parents.

More than half (52 percent) of the children with ineligible parents had no income of their own on the record. This figure was higher (61 percent) among those living with only one parent. Further, almost all of the children with income of their own had only unearned income.

The types of income recorded for the parents are also shown in table 5. There are substantial differences between one-parent and two-parent families. More than 40 percent of the one-parent families, but 19 percent of the two-parent families, had no income on the record. Of the two-parent families, 59 percent had earnings (solely or in combination with unearned income), while 22 percent of the one-parent families had earnings.

Table 6 shows the average monthly amount of gross parental income in December 1991, by type of income and number of parents in the family. As expected, income in the one-parent families was much lower for each type. The reason for the differences in income levels relates to the various exclusions applicable to earnings, as well as allocations of income for ineligible parents and ineligible children living with the recipient.

Table 3.—Number of children receiving SSI payments and percentage distribution, by selected characteristic, December 1991¹

Selected characteristic	Children receiving SSI	
	Number	Percent
Total	431,730	100.0
Age:		
Under 6	91,590	21.2
6-12	174,470	40.4
13-17	118,930	27.5
18-21	46,740	10.8
Sex:		
Female	170,960	39.6
Male	260,770	60.4
Living arrangement:		
Own household	76,950	17.8
Another's household	23,620	5.5
Parent's household	318,850	73.9
Medicaid institution	12,310	2.9
Income:		
Earnings	7,370	1.7
Unearned income	193,650	44.9
Social Security	33,480	7.8
Veterans	1,600	.4
Other	158,570	36.7

¹ Based on a 10-percent sample file. Number of persons and average payments due January 1, 1992.

Table 4.—Number of children receiving SSI payments and percentage distribution, by diagnostic group, December 1991¹

Diagnostic group	Children receiving SSI	
	Number	Percent
Total	431,730	(2)
Diagnosis available	336,910	100.0
Infectious and parasitic diseases	1,370	.4
Neoplasms	7,530	2.2
Endocrine, nutritional, and metabolic diseases	13,530	4.0
Mental Disorders:		
Psychotic and neurotic disorders	41,100	12.2
Mental retardation	147,730	43.8
Diseases of the—		
Nervous system and sense organs	62,630	18.6
Circulatory system	2,910	.9
Respiratory system	7,740	2.3
Digestive system	1,250	.4
Musculoskeletal system and connective tissues	5,740	1.7
Congenital anomalies	18,320	5.4
Other	27,150	8.1

¹ Based on a 10-percent sample file. Number of persons and average payments due January 1, 1992.

² Not applicable.

Table 5.—Number of child SSI recipients living with an ineligible parent(s), by type of income, December 1991¹

Type of income	Total	One parent	Two parents
Total number.....	333,550	211,600	121,950
Total percent.....	100.0	100.0	100.0
Child SSI recipients with—			
Earned income.....	720	460	260
Unearned income.....	158,350	82,100	76,250
Both earned and unearned income..	1,060	520	540
No income.....	173,420	128,520	44,900
Ineligible parent(s) with—			
Earned income.....	98	37,500	60,540
Unearned income.....	108,660	82,090	26,570
Both earned and unearned income..	17,960	6,370	11,590
No income.....	108,890	85,640	23,250

¹ Based on a 10-percent sample.

Table 6.—Average monthly amount of income of an ineligible parent(s), by type of income of parent, December 1991¹

Type of income of parent ²	SSI recipient with—	
	One parent	Two parents
Earned income only.....	\$850.03	\$1,244.37
Unearned income only.....	166.19	412.00
Both earned and unearned.....	763.25	1,331.45

¹ Based on a 10-percent sample file.

² Averages based only on parents with income.