



Please Note

This packet does not contain legal advice.

This guide contains legal information, not legal advice. Legal *information* is background information about your rights. Legal *advice* is advice from a lawyer about what to do in your own specific situation. Legal Aid is not your lawyer in your Social Security matter.

How to Prepare for Your Child's SSI Hearing

Updated October 2025

(1) REVIEW YOUR CHILD'S SOCIAL SECURITY OFFICE OF HEARING OPERATIONS (OHO) FILE.

OHO should send you a CD that contains all medical and disability-related records in your child's file. If you have an email address, you may also request to receive the records in your child's file through a password-protected email. If you have not received the CD or email with records by the time your child is assigned a hearing date, call OHO and ask for it: (866) 414-6259.

(2) ASK YOUR CHILD'S DOCTORS AND SCHOOL FOR RECORDS.

You should request recent (past 2-3 years) records from your child's doctors, therapist, case worker, and school. Ask your child's past and current treatment providers (including hospitals) for medical and mental health records. This includes lab test results (such as blood tests) and imaging test results (like X-rays and MRIs) as well as letters or reports that state your child's diagnosis, symptoms, medications, and difficulties in functioning. Ask your child's school for education records, such as IEPs, attendance records, and any test results. You can also call OHO to ask for help in obtaining records: (866) 414-6259.

(3) GIVE MEDICAL AND EDUCATIONAL RECORDS TO OHO AT LEAST FIVE 5 BUSINESS DAYS BEFORE YOUR CHILD'S HEARING.

Make a copy of all records for yourself and then send or hand-deliver them to OHO. OHO must receive all records at least 5 business days before the hearing. If you cannot get records in time, then you must notify the judge at least 5 days before the hearing to explain that despite your efforts, you were unable to get important records. You can ask for the judge's help getting records before or at the hearing, but the judge may deny your request.

(4) BE PREPARED TO TALK ABOUT YOUR CHILD'S PHYSICAL AND/OR MENTAL CONDITIONS AT THE HEARING.

If your child is able to explain their condition themselves, they will likely be expected to testify. At the hearing, you (and your child, if they can testify) should explain how often and how bad their physical and/or mental conditions are on a daily basis, including any pain. Also explain specifics about how your child's condition affects their ability to: (1) concentrate and learn new information; (2) focus on and complete tasks; (3) talk and get along with others; (4) move around and pick up objects; (5) take care of their emotional and physical needs; and (6) maintain overall health. If your child has a history of substance abuse, be prepared to explain that your child's history of substance abuse began after their physical or mental health condition did.

Legal Aid DC

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OHO may also be able to send you these records electronically.

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