

## Children Receiving SSI Payments, December 1992

by Lenna Kennedy\*

In December 1992, over 623,000 blind and disabled recipients classified as children were receiving Supplemental Security Income (SSI) payments. These children make up 11.2 percent of the over 5.6 million SSI recipients in December. The December data reflect an increase of more than 94,000 child recipients since June 1992 (table 1).

To be eligible for SSI payments as a child, an individual must be under age 18

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(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 "snapshots" of selected program and demographic characteristics of children who receive SSI payments. Table 1 is based on universe counts. Tables 2-9 are based on the SSI 10-percent files for December 1992 and December 1989.

For both years, the tables are limited to the children who were 21 years old or younger in December, and who were due to receive an SSI payment on January 1. All of the tables in this note are based on

the Supplemental Security Record (SSR), the main administrative data base for the SSI program.

### Geographic Distribution and Average Payment

Table 2 shows the number of children receiving SSI payments and the average federally administered payment amount. The data are arranged by Health and Human Services administrative regions and then by State.

The five States with the largest numbers of children receiving SSI were New York, California, Texas, Florida,

Table 1.—Total number of SSI recipients, and number and percentage distribution of adults and children, 1974–92<sup>1</sup>

Month and year	Total	Aged		Blind and disabled <sup>2</sup>			
		Number	Percent	Adults		Children	
				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
1992:							
June	5,359,882	1,470,293	27.4	3,359,391	62.7	530,198	9.9
December	5,566,189	1,471,022	26.4	3,471,324	62.4	623,845	11.2

<sup>1</sup>Persons who received a payment in December 1992.

<sup>2</sup>For 1991 and 1992, some persons aged 18–21, who were classified as adults in terms of their SSI payment status, were counted as children in this table. This means that the count of adults is low and the count of children is high.

and Ohio. Together they accounted for about one-third of all child recipients aged 21 or younger.

The average SSI payment due to child recipients on January 1, 1993, was \$400. This amount includes federally administered State supplementation where applicable, but does not include any retroactive payments.

### Demographic Characteristics

In December 1992, 7 percent of the children receiving SSI payments were

2 years old or younger, 13 percent were from ages 3 to 5, and 41 percent were from ages 6 to 12. Twenty-six percent, an estimated 171,000 children, were from ages 13 to 17 (table 3).

Children receiving SSI are more likely to be boys than girls, by about 3 to 2. This gender pattern is generally the same as that found among adult disabled recipients. About 44 percent of the children were classified as "Black," "Hispanic," or "Other."

Almost three-quarters of child SSI recipients lived with their parent(s).

Another 19 percent lived in hospitals, nursing homes, residential schools, foster care, or independently. Two percent of the study group were patients in a medical facility where more than half of the cost of their care is covered by the Medicaid program.

Almost all (98 percent) of the children in the study group were U.S. citizens, either by birth or naturalization.

### Diagnosis

More than half (60 percent) of SSI children were disabled based on a mental

Table 2.—Number of children receiving SSI payments and average federally administered payment amount, by region and State, December 1992<sup>1</sup>

Region and State	Number of children	Average federally administered payment	Region and State	Number of children	Average federally administered payment
Total .....	614,190	\$400	Dallas, total .....	94,400	\$381
Boston, total .....	19,640	411	Arkansas .....	13,210	380
Connecticut .....	3,360	391	Louisiana .....	28,210	384
Maine .....	1,880	389	New Mexico .....	4,390	382
Massachusetts .....	10,570	418	Oklahoma .....	8,350	382
New Hampshire .....	1,030	383	Texas .....	40,240	379
Rhode Island .....	1,800	434	Kansas City, total .....	28,110	382
Vermont .....	1,000	435	Iowa .....	5,520	368
New York, total .....	65,910	407	Kansas .....	5,000	364
New Jersey .....	14,570	403	Missouri .....	14,610	394
New York .....	51,340	408	Nebraska .....	2,980	378
Philadelphia, total .....	57,570	398	Denver, total .....	13,680	380
Delaware .....	1,410	351	Colorado .....	5,640	377
District of Columbia .....	1,650	392	Montana .....	1,520	408
Pennsylvania .....	28,390	416	North Dakota .....	880	350
Maryland .....	7,470	378	South Dakota .....	1,960	388
Virginia .....	12,850	378	Utah .....	2,970	374
West Virginia .....	5,800	393	Wyoming .....	710	373
Atlanta, total .....	145,050	387	San Francisco, total .....	59,100	467
Alabama .....	17,750	393	Arizona .....	7,310	389
Florida .....	31,260	391	California .....	49,380	482
Georgia .....	18,180	383	Hawaii .....	810	378
Kentucky .....	14,080	387	Nevada .....	1,540	373
Mississippi .....	17,560	393	Northern Marianas .....	60	400
North Carolina .....	18,610	376	Seattle, total .....	14,770	389
South Carolina .....	11,580	383	Alaska .....	510	367
Tennessee .....	16,030	389	Idaho .....	2,580	378
Chicago, total .....	115,960	400	Oregon .....	4,750	374
Illinois .....	31,370	390	Washington .....	6,930	404
Indiana .....	13,720	373			
Michigan .....	23,070	409			
Minnesota .....	5,250	374			
Ohio .....	28,480	383			
Wisconsin .....	14,070	478			

<sup>1</sup>Based on a 10-percent sample. Includes persons with payments due January 1, 1993. For 1991 and 1992, some persons aged 18–21, who were classified as adults in terms of their SSI payment status, were counted as children in this table. This means that the count of adults is low and the count of children is high.

disorder, and most of these (43 percent of all SSI children) were children with mental retardation (table 4). The only other diagnostic category with a sizable percentage of child recipients was diseases of the nervous system and sense organs (15 percent), which included all of the approximately 9,000 blind children receiving SSI payments in December 1992. (This distribution is based on the diagnoses of the 84 percent of children for whom a diagnostic code is available on the SSR.)

The incidence of mental disorders as a primary diagnosis increased with age, from 31 percent of those under age 6 to 75 percent of those from ages 13 to 17. The reverse pattern appeared among children with diseases of the nervous system or sense organs.

### *Income*

Less than 2 percent of SSI children had earnings in December 1992, about the same percentage as in June 1992. About 27 percent had some type of unearned income, but few of them were receiving benefits from Social Security (8 percent) or pension or compensation payments from the Department of Veterans' Affairs (less than 1 percent). What the child recipients typically had was assistance based on need, child support, and income deemed from the parent(s) with whom they were living.

Whatever the source of income to SSI children, the amounts that are countable for program purposes appear to be small. Table 5 shows the amount of the Federal SSI payments due on January 1,

1993. Two out of three children received \$434 at that time. The \$434 represents the maximum amount of Federal SSI payable in 1993 to a person without countable income.

### *Young Adult Recipients*

In addition to the over 600,000 recipients who are currently considered as children for program purposes, the December 1992 SSI rolls included another 186,000 recipients who first received SSI payments before their 18th birthday (table 6).

Most of these recipients, more than 152,000, were from 22 to 35 years of age in 1992. Based on the application date on the SSR, they have been receiving SSI for most of their lives. Almost half (46 percent) applied in the period 1974-76, when SSI payments were first being made.

Diagnostic coding is very sparse for this group of recipients, but "mental retardation" is the code that appears most frequently.

### *Caseload Changes*

In the 3-year period from December 1989 to December 1992, the number of children aged 21 or younger who received SSI payments more than doubled, increasing from about 293,000 to 614,000. As a proportion of the total SSI caseload, children rose from about 6.4 percent in 1989 to 11 percent in 1992.

Geographically the increase was apparent in every State, but it was especially large in some areas (table 7). Caseload at least doubled in 6 out of 10 regions, and in 30 States. The Chicago region had the greatest growth (130 percent). States with the greatest percentage change were Arkansas (159 percent), Wyoming (145 percent), Louisiana (143 percent), and Michigan (140 percent). Of these, all States but Michigan had small populations of children.

By 1992, New York had surpassed California in the number of children receiving SSI (51,340 compared with 49,380). Together, these two States had

Table 3.—Number of children receiving SSI and percentage distribution, by selected characteristics, December 1992<sup>1</sup>

Selected characteristics	Number	Percent
Total .....	614,190	100.0
Age:		
Under 3 .....	44,290	7.2
3-5 .....	81,700	13.3
6-12 .....	249,700	40.7
13-17 .....	171,000	27.8
18-21 <sup>2</sup> .....	67,500	11.0
Sex:		
Female .....	236,220	38.5
Male .....	377,970	61.5
Race or national origin:		
White .....	261,510	42.6
Black .....	204,630	33.3
Hispanic .....	50,330	8.2
Other .....	25,210	4.1
Unknown .....	72,510	11.8
Living arrangements:		
Own household .....	111,350	18.1
Another's household .....	30,040	4.9
Parent's household .....	459,950	74.9
Medicaid institution .....	12,830	2.1
Legal status:		
U.S. citizen .....	602,320	98.1
Alien, total .....	8,950	1.5
Lawful admission .....	5,450	.9
Color of law .....	3,500	.6
Unknown .....	2,920	.5

<sup>1</sup>Based on a 10-percent sample file. Includes recipients and payments due January 1, 1993.

<sup>2</sup>For 1991 and 1992, some persons aged 18-21, who were classified as adults in terms of their SSI payment status, were counted as children in this table. This means that the count of adults is low and the count of children is high.

Table 4.—Number of children receiving SSI, and percentage distribution by age and diagnostic group, December 1992<sup>1</sup>

Diagnostic group	Total		Under 6 years		6-12 years		13-17 years		18-21 years <sup>2</sup>	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Total .....	614,190	...	125,990	...	249,700	...	171,000	...	67,500	...
Total with diagnosis available ..	513,420	100.0	116,260	100.0	216,340	100.0	133,030	100.0	47,790	100.0
Infectious and parasitic diseases ....	2,080	.4	1,190	1.0	580	.3	180	.1	130	.3
Neoplasms .....	9,190	1.8	2,660	2.3	4,040	1.9	1,840	1.4	650	1.4
Endocrine, nutritional, and metabolic diseases .....	6,560	1.3	2,210	1.9	2,130	1.0	1,600	1.2	620	1.3
Mental disorders:										
Psychotic and neurotic disorders ..	84,990	16.6	9,790	8.4	39,550	18.3	28,280	21.3	7,370	15.4
Mental retardation .....	222,540	43.3	25,810	22.2	97,810	45.2	72,070	54.2	26,850	56.2
Diseases of the—										
Nervous system and sense organs .....	76,330	14.9	24,510	21.1	31,710	14.7	13,110	9.9	7,000	14.6
Circulatory system .....	3,860	.8	1,830	1.6	1,060	.5	760	.6	210	.4
Respiratory system .....	12,560	2.4	5,860	5.0	4,590	2.1	1,700	1.3	410	.9
Digestive system .....	1,800	.4	1,020	.9	500	.2	190	.1	90	.2
Musculoskeletal system and connective tissues .....	7,780	1.5	2,090	1.8	2,640	1.2	2,080	1.6	970	2.0
Congenital anomalies .....	24,190	4.7	13,070	11.2	8,280	3.8	2,010	1.5	830	1.7
Other .....	61,540	12.0	26,220	22.6	23,450	10.8	9,210	6.9	2,660	5.6

<sup>1</sup>Based on a 10-percent sample file. Includes persons with payment due January 1, 1993.

<sup>2</sup>For 1991 and 1992, some persons aged 18-21, who were classified as adults in terms of their SSI payment status, were counted as children in this table. This means that the count of adults is low and the count of children is high.

Table 5.—Amount of Federal payments to child SSI recipients, and percentage distribution, by amount, December 1992<sup>1</sup>

Monthly payment amount	Number	Percent
Total .....	614,190	100.0
None <sup>2</sup> .....	1,440	.2
Under \$50 .....	18,390	3.0
\$50-\$99 .....	6,470	1.1
\$100-\$199 .....	20,190	3.3
\$200-\$299 .....	59,000	9.6
\$300-\$399 .....	68,990	11.2
\$400-\$433 .....	25,660	4.2
\$434 .....	414,050	67.4

<sup>1</sup>Based on a 10-percent sample file. Includes recipients with payments due January 1, 1993. For 1991 and 1992, some persons aged 18-21, who were classified as adults in terms of their SSI payment status, were counted as children in this table. This means that the count of adults is low and the count of children is high.

<sup>2</sup>Includes persons receiving only a State supplementary payment on January 1, 1993.

Table 6.—Number of adult recipients who first applied for SSI before age 18, by year of most recent application and age in 1992

Year of most recent application	Total	Age in 1992	
		18-21	22-35 <sup>1</sup>
Total number ..	186,270	33,830	152,440
Total percent ....	100.0	100.0	100.0
1974-76 .....	40.2	12.8	46.4
1977-81 .....	34.0	25.4	35.9
1982-86 .....	19.8	34.5	16.6
1987-91 .....	6.0	27.3	1.1

<sup>1</sup>Based on a 10-percent sample file. Those under age 18 in 1974 would be no more than 35 in 1992.

about one-sixth of all children receiving SSI.

The characteristics of children receiving SSI also changed over the 3 years (table 8). Compared with 1989,

the caseload at the end of 1992 contained more than twice as many preschool children (about 126,000 to 58,000). The proportion of boys increased from 59 to 62 percent, while the proportion of black and Hispanic children increased from 36 to 41 percent (an increase of more than 148,000 persons).

Proportionally fewer of the children were living in Medicaid institutions in 1992 than in 1989 (down from 4 percent to 2 percent). There was a substantial increase in the proportion of recipient children living in single-parent families (from 47 percent to 52 percent).

In both time periods, mental retardation was the predominant disabling condition, affecting about 47 percent of the children in 1989 and 43 percent in 1992. However, the numbers of psychotic and neurotic disorders increased the most, from 6 percent of the total in 1989 to 17 percent in 1992 (table 9).

Table 7.—Number of children receiving SSI payments, by region and State, December 1989 and 1992<sup>1</sup>

Region and State	December—		Percent change	Region and State	December—		Percent change
	1992 <sup>1</sup>	1989			1992 <sup>1</sup>	1989	
Total .....	614,190	293,320	109.4	Dallas, total .....	94,400	44,080	114.2
Boston, total .....	19,640	10,910	80.0	Arkansas .....	13,210	5,100	159.0
Connecticut .....	3,360	2,060	63.1	Louisiana .....	28,210	11,630	142.6
Maine .....	1,880	940	100.0	New Mexico .....	4,390	2,090	110.0
Massachusetts .....	10,570	5,660	86.7	Oklahoma .....	8,350	3,660	128.1
New Hampshire .....	1,030	640	60.9	Texas .....	40,240	21,600	86.3
Rhode Island .....	1,800	1,110	62.2	Kansas City, total .....	28,110	12,630	122.6
Vermont .....	1,000	500	100.0	Iowa .....	5,520	2,690	105.2
New York, total .....	65,910	31,670	108.1	Kansas .....	5,000	2,150	132.6
New Jersey .....	14,570	6,720	116.8	Missouri .....	14,610	6,100	139.5
New York .....	51,340	24,950	105.8	Nebraska .....	2,980	1,690	76.3
Philadelphia, total .....	57,570	28,040	105.3	Denver, total .....	13,680	7,760	76.3
Delaware .....	1,410	890	58.4	Colorado .....	5,640	3,420	64.9
District of Columbia .....	1,650	980	68.4	Montana .....	1,520	1,010	50.5
Pennsylvania .....	28,390	13,940	103.7	North Dakota .....	880	530	66.0
Maryland .....	7,470	3,700	101.9	South Dakota .....	1,960	1,070	83.2
Virginia .....	12,850	5,490	134.1	Utah .....	2,970	1,440	106.3
West Virginia .....	5,800	3,040	90.8	Wyoming .....	710	290	144.8
Atlanta, total .....	145,050	67,470	115.0	San Francisco, total .....	59,100	32,740	80.5
Alabama .....	17,750	8,240	115.4	Arizona .....	7,310	3,620	101.9
Florida .....	31,260	13,580	130.2	California .....	49,380	27,690	78.3
Georgia .....	18,180	9,710	87.2	Hawaii .....	810	460	76.1
Kentucky .....	14,080	6,630	112.4	Nevada .....	1,540	870	77.0
Mississippi .....	17,560	7,690	128.3	Northern Marianas .....	60	100	-40.0
North Carolina .....	18,610	8,230	126.1	Seattle, total .....	14,770	7,530	96.1
South Carolina .....	11,580	5,820	99.0	Alaska .....	510	360	41.7
Tennessee .....	16,030	7,570	111.8	Idaho .....	2,580	1,120	130.4
Chicago, total .....	115,960	50,490	129.7	Oregon .....	4,750	2,180	117.9
Illinois .....	31,370	12,460	151.8	Washington .....	6,930	3,870	79.1
Indiana .....	13,720	6,080	125.7				
Michigan .....	23,070	9,610	140.1				
Minnesota .....	5,250	2,670	96.6				
Ohio .....	28,480	13,660	108.5				
Wisconsin .....	14,070	6,010	134.1				

<sup>1</sup>Based on a 10-percent sample. Persons with payments due January 1, 1993 and January 1, 1990. For 1991 and 1992, some persons aged 18-21, who were classified as adults in terms of their SSI payment status, were counted as children in this table. This means that the count of adults is low and the count of children is high.

Table 8.—Number of children receiving SSI, and percentage distribution by selected characteristics, December 1989 and 1992<sup>1</sup>

Selected characteristics	December 1992		December 1989	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Total .....	614,190	100.0	293,320	100.0
Age:				
Under 3.....	44,290	7.2	18,090	6.2
3-5 .....	81,700	13.3	40,180	13.7
6-12 .....	249,700	40.7	118,370	40.4
13-17 .....	171,000	27.8	86,860	29.6
18-21 <sup>2</sup> .....	67,500	11.0	29,820	10.2
Sex:				
Female.....	236,220	38.5	121,770	41.5
Male.....	377,970	61.5	171,550	58.5
Race or national origin:				
White.....	261,510	42.6	146,430	49.9
Black .....	204,630	33.3	89,550	30.5
Hispanic.....	50,330	8.2	16,470	5.6
Other.....	25,210	4.1	18,500	6.3
Unknown.....	72,510	11.8	22,370	7.6
Living arrangements:				
Own household .....	111,350	18.1	54,130	18.5
Another's household .....	30,040	4.9	16,400	5.6
Parent's household.....	459,950	74.9	210,340	71.7
Medicaid institution.....	12,830	2.1	12,450	4.2
Parents present:				
One parent .....	321,030	52.3	138,430	47.2
Two parents .....	191,370	31.2	87,830	29.9
None .....	101,790	16.6	67,060	22.9
Legal status:				
U.S. citizen.....	602,320	98.1	282,630	96.4
Alien, total .....	8,950	1.5	5,010	1.7
Lawful admission.....	5,450	.9	2,330	.8
Color of law .....	3,500	.6	2,680	.9
Unknown .....	2,920	.5	5,680	1.9

<sup>1</sup>Based on a 10-percent sample file. Includes recipients and payments due January 1, 1993, and January 1, 1990.

<sup>2</sup>For 1991 and 1992, some persons aged 18-21, who were classified as adults in terms of their SSI payment status, were counted as children in this table. This means that the count of adults is low and the count of children is high.

Table 9.—Number of children receiving SSI and percentage distribution, by diagnostic group, 1989 and 1992<sup>1</sup>

Diagnostic group	December 1992		December 1989	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Total .....	614,190	...	293,320	...
Total with diagnosis available.....	513,420	100.0	199,850	100.0
Infectious and parasitic diseases.....	2,080	.4	770	.4
Neoplasms.....	9,190	1.8	5,440	2.7
Endocrine, nutritional, and metabolic diseases.....	6,560	1.3	2,750	1.4
Mental disorders:				
Psychotic and neurotic disorders .....	84,990	16.6	12,770	6.4
Mental retardation .....	222,540	43.3	93,260	46.7
Diseases of the—				
Nervous system and sense organs.....	76,330	14.9	45,600	22.8
Circulatory system.....	3,860	.8	1,690	.8
Respiratory system .....	12,560	2.4	3,540	1.8
Digestive system .....	1,800	.4	670	.3
Musculoskeletal system and connective tissues .....	7,780	1.5	3,270	1.6
Congenital anomalies .....	24,190	4.7	12,160	6.1
Other .....	61,540	12.0	17,930	9.0

<sup>1</sup>Based on a 10-percent sample file. Includes recipients and payments due January 1, 1993, and January 1, 1990. For 1991 and 1992, some persons aged 18-21, who were classified as adults in terms of their SSI payment status, were counted as children in this table. This means that the count of adults is low and the count of children is high.