

OASIS · AT A GLANCE

SSI at 18 and the Age-18 Redetermination

Why eligibility shifts the day a young adult turns eighteen, why initial denial rates are brutally high, and how to start documentation at sixteen so the appeal does not have to.

BY JIM PALASTY · OASIS FOR AUTISM · 10 MIN READ

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IN 10 LOSE SSI

Roughly four in ten youth lose SSI at the age-18 redetermination on the first decision. Most of those denials are reversible.

How it works

THREE STEPS

Start documentation

Functional impact records, school services data, treatment notes, daily-living evidence. Begin three running logs.



Pre-file the binder

Cover letter, current evidence, named witnesses. Submit before SSA mails the redetermination notice.



Appeal anything

The first denial is a draft, not a verdict. Reconsideration, hearing, and the Appeals Council each reverse a real share.

What the redetermination looks at

Adult listings	Listings 12.10 (autism), 12.04, 12.05, 12.11, 12.15
Functional capacity	Mental RFC and work-related abilities
Daily living	Self-care, errands, food prep, navigation
Social functioning	Community, family, work environments
Concentration	Persistence, pace, complex task completion
Adaptation	New environments, change, stress tolerance
Treatment	Records of access, side effects, gaps

WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE

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We got the denial on a Saturday. Forty-three pages. The summary said he was capable of substantial gainful activity. He cannot order a sandwich without scripting it for thirty minutes. He has never held a job. We filed reconsideration on Monday. We won at the hearing nine months later. The check came with back pay.

ANGELA, KALAMAZOO

What matters, at a glance

The 4-in-10 cliff

Roughly forty percent of youth on SSI lose benefits at the age-18 redetermination on the initial decision. Not because they got better. Because the standard changed.

Adult criteria are different

Childhood listings vanish. Substantial gainful activity, residual functional capacity, and adult listings replace them. Document accordingly.

Parental income stops counting

At 18, SSI deeming rules end. New financial calculus. Eligibility may newly open if parental income previously disqualified the child.

The 60-day appeal clock

From the date on the denial notice, sixty days to file. Miss it and you start over from zero. Calendar it. Set two reminders.

Daily-living evidence wins

A typical-day log signed by a parent or staff is more useful than another doctor letter. Concrete tasks. Concrete prompts. Concrete failures.

Stack the appeal

Reconsideration, hearing, Appeals Council, federal court. Each level reverses a meaningful share of denials. Do not stop at the first no.

BRING THESE · CHECK AS YOU GO

- | | |
|---|---|
| ☐ Denial letter, full document scanned | ☐ Cover sheet with case number and BNC |
| ☐ Reconsideration form filed by date | ☐ Updated medical records requested |
| ☐ Daily-living log attached | ☐ Two-witness statements collected |
| ☐ Representation engaged | |

YOUR MOVE

When the denial letter arrives

- 1 Read the denial all the way to the back. The reasons are in the technical rationale.
- 2 File Form SSA-561 for reconsideration within sixty days.
- 3 If reconsideration fails, request an Administrative Law Judge hearing. Engage representation.
- 4 If the ALJ denies, request Appeals Council review.
- 5 If the AC denies, federal court is the next step. Talk to a benefits attorney.

At each appeal level the standard says: any new and material evidence. Bring it.

RESOURCES NAMED IN THIS POST

oasisforautism.com · <https://oasisforautism.com>

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR



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