What is SSI?
SSI is short for Supplemental Security Income. SSI is a program under the Social Security Administration (SSA) that pays monthly benefits to people who are age 65 or older, are blind or have a disability and who have limited resources and income.

Often times, children (under 18 years of age) applying for SSI do not meet the financial and resource limitation allowance due to required reporting of all household income. However, when a child becomes an adult at age 18, the family’s income and resources will no longer be considered when determining a child’s financial SSI eligibility. Students should make application for SSI in the month after they turn 18. The individual applying must be present at the meeting, along with the parents to assist with answering questions.

If you plan to have your child apply for SSA disability benefits, you need to call SSA to schedule an appointment or apply online at www.ssa.gov. For phone numbers of regional offices, go to www.ssa.gov, click on “Find a Social Security Office” on the right hand side and then enter your zip code.

NOTE: If your child with a disability is receiving SSI benefits prior to age 18, he/she must reapply with SSA for SSI benefits as an adult. For this application, SSA will use somewhat different disability criteria than were used to evaluate his/her disability as a child. The adult definition of disability for SSI eligibility states: “An individual age 16 and older is ‘disabled’ if he or she has a medically determinable physical or mental impairment, which results in the inability to do any substantial gainful activity, and can be expected to result in death; or has lasted or can be expected to last for a continuous period of not less than 12 months.

SSI is to be used to pay the costs of food, clothing and shelter for the recipient. If your child is living with you and is approved for SSI after he/she turns 18, the SSI check will be reduced by one-third unless he/she is paying living expenses. The amount of living expenses does need to be a fair amount, one that a parent would charge for anyone who may rent a room in the household. A rental agreement between the parent and child should be developed and sent to SSA to address this reduction.

For more information about Social Security benefits: http://www.ssa.gov-multimedia/video/ssi/

Opportunities for Your Child in the Adult Services System
Family Support 360 PLANS is a program for people with developmental disabilities. These services will make it easier for people to live and work in the community on their own. Contact the Division of Developmental Disabilities at 1-800-265-9684

Independent Living Centers provide services to individuals with disabilities in the areas of advocacy, information and referrals, independent living skills and training and peer support. Contact an Independent Living Specialist at 1-800-265-9684

DakotaLink provides assistance to individuals of all ages to acquire and use the latest available assistive technology devices that best meet the need to maintain independence at home, work, in the classroom or in leisure activities.

Contact DakotaLink at 1-800-645-0673 or www.dakotalink.net

South Dakota Benefits Specialist Network provides advice and support on Social Security work incentives, Medicaid, Food Stamps, TANF, Housing Assistance and other disability related benefits. Contact South Dakota Benefits Specialist Network at 1-800-224-5336 for more information.

The Law & Guardianship

It can be a particularly worrisome time if you question your child’s ability to make important life decisions when he/she turns 18. Guardianship may be an answer.

To learn about the pros, cons, and alternatives to guardianship or for more information, contact either:

The Guardianship Program, Inc. (605) 224-9647 or 1-866-228-9119
sd.guaradians@gmail.com

South Dakota Advocacy Services (605) 224-8294 or 1-800-658-4762
sdas@sdadvocacy.com

South Dakota School for the Deaf 2001 East 8th Street Sioux Falls, SD 57103-1896 Phone: 605.367.5200 Fax: 605.367.5209 http://sdss.sdbor.edu/

SDSD serves as a resource for families and local schools by providing a specialist in hearing loss as a member of the educational team.

So your child is deaf or hard of hearing and getting ready to transition into adulthood . . .

Tips for Parents

“...a young person with a disability should be given opportunities to make choices and experience the consequences of those choices…”
“Learning to behave responsibly comes with support, practice, and mistakes…”
“Few things help children more than placing responsibility upon them and letting them know that you trust them…”

(Anonymous)

While in high school, your child should...

✓ Apply for the Youth Leadership Forum (www.tslp.org).
✓ Learn about his/her disability.
✓ Become involved in extra-curricular activities.
✓ Share strengths, learning styles, challenges and needed accommodations with the general education teachers.
✓ Consider applying for services through the Division of Rehabilitation Services.
✓ Actively participate in IEP meetings.
✓ Engage in volunteer work experiences.
✓ Explore career opportunities and develop career interests.
✓ Participate in job shadow opportunities.

If your child is going on to post-secondary schooling, they should also...

✓ Tour and visit with disability services office at colleges of interest.
✓ Attend Catch the Wave (www.tslp.org).
✓ Address the possible need for accessing assistive technology devices.
✓ Challenge themselves with rigorous courses in the general education setting.
✓ Set high standards for themselves.
✓ Set up a regular study schedule.
✓ Share strengths, learning styles, challenges and needed accommodations with the general education teachers.
✓ Take ACT (American College Testing) or SAT (Standard Achievement Testing) exams early.
To learn more go to: www.sdmylife.com

The Power of Self-Advocacy

Self-advocacy is the art of speaking up for yourself and your needs and being able to explain a disability clearly and concisely. Once your child understands his/her disability, the next step is to know what actions or things are needed to be successful. No one at a college, technical institute or work can, or will, seek your child out because they think that your child may have a disability. Students with disabilities need to be able to self-identify and request accommodations. The skill of being able to explain your disability and to speak up for what you need and deserve is of the utmost importance to your child in being successful!

Communication Services for the Deaf (CSD) has Deaf Advocacy Training available. Contact Lance Sigdestad at LSigdestad@c-s-d.org or (605) 367-5760.

SDMyLife is a FREE online program for South Dakota students to help them better understand themselves and how their interests, skills, and knowledge relate to real-world academic and career opportunities. Students use SDMyLife to research, select, and plan their careers. They can explore by career cluster, keyword, or school subject. Students can also research postsecondary education and training options, build a portfolio, study with Method Test Prep and find out about scholarships opportunities. They can also save assessment scores, log career planning activities and extra-curricular involvement, and even build a resume!

Parents are also able to create a FREE portal to see what their child has been researching for employment ideas as well as have access to a number of resources that will be helpful in their child's career planning.

To learn more go to: www.sdmylife.com