

Legal Aid offers several legal services for foster children including,

The Foster Kids SSI Project

What is the Foster Kids SSI Project?

The Foster Kids SSI Project is the result of a partnership between the Department of Human Services (DHS) and the Legal Aid Society of Hawaii. It is a program established to ensure that all non-Title IVE foster children—children who are not eligible for federal money for foster care and adoption assistance—have the opportunity to obtain Social Security benefits.

How does it work?

DHS refers foster children who are potential Supplementary Security Income (SSI) recipients to Legal Aid. These children are all non-Title IVE foster children and are generally receiving Difficulty of Care (DOC) payments.

Once Legal Aid receives the referral, a Legal Aid representative contacts DHS to set up an appointment to review the files of the particular child. At the review, we will determine whether or not we ought to apply the child for SSI.

If we decide to apply the child, we will complete all the necessary paperwork for the SSI claim. The social worker will only have to sign the appropriate forms and provide documentation such as the child's birth certificate and the court order showing DHS custody of the child for Social Security to begin the formal application process.

TO APPLY, CALL:

1-800-499-4302

OAHU: 536-4302

MAUI: 242-0724

HILO: 934-0678

KONA: 329-8331

KAUAI: 245-7580

MOLOKAI: 553-3251

LANAI: 565-6089

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808-536-4302

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BE YOUR FOSTER CHILD'S BEST ADVOCATE!

**THIS BROCHURE
PROVIDES BASICS TIPS
ON HOW BEST TO
ADVOCATE FOR YOUR
FOSTER CHILD.**

How Can I Be My Foster Child's Best Advocate?

Attend

Go to all court hearings regarding your foster child. DHS is required to give you notice of these hearings.

Take notes on what happens, and afterwards, ask the DHS worker or GAL to clarify anything you have questions about.

Go to all school meetings about your foster child. Also inform the GAL in advance of any disciplinary hearings (like suspension or expulsion hearings), and Individualized Education Program meetings.

Record

Keep a log of your foster child's progress in key areas:

- Behavior
- Self-care (personal hygiene, etc)
- Social interactions
- Academics



Note any setbacks in these areas and what events and/or conversations that may have occurred just before the setback.

Keep track of visits from the GAL and DHS worker.

Write down days, times, and lengths of any and all visits with parents and other relatives and note any unusual behavior before or after these visits.

(However, please do not criticize the child's family in front of him/her.)

Collect

Keep copies of all reports, updates, and progress notes given to you by your foster child's schools, therapists, doctors, dentists, & service providers. If you do not get these reports, ask for them!

Be Pro-Active

Call the DHS worker and GAL early and often if your foster child is not receiving a service essential to his/her well-being:

- *Doctor, Dentist, and/or Therapist
- *Educational Services (accommodations for disabilities, special education services, etc.)

Distribute

Make sure the Guardian Ad Litem (GAL) and Department of Human Services (DHS) workers get copies of all recent reports (See Above) at least 15 days before every court date.