



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

OFFICE OF SPECIAL EDUCATION AND REHABILITATIVE SERVICES

OCT 3 1997

Dear

This letter is in response to your e-mail to President Clinton regarding changes to the Social Security Income (SSI) law. You indicate that your [redacted] is hearing impaired and, if the administrative law judge does not rule in your [redacted]'s favor, you will lose your SSI support for oral school program. Your e-mail was forwarded to the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) in the United States Department of Education because of the possibility that your [redacted] may be eligible for special education and related services.

The Office of Special Education Programs administers the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). Under the IDEA, as well as under applicable special education rules in Arkansas, a free appropriate public education (FAPE) must be available to all three through five-year-old children if those children are found to have a disability under State standards and are in need of special education and related services. The special education and related services for which your [redacted] may qualify through your local school district are separate from SSI, and possible eligibility for special education and related services under the IDEA are not dependent upon eligibility for SSI.

You should contact your local school district to seek special education and related services for your child. Upon referral, and with your consent, the school district will conduct an evaluation of your child to gather relevant functional and developmental information, including information you provide. Upon completion of the evaluation, a team of qualified professionals which includes you, the parent, will make a determination of your [redacted]'s eligibility. If [redacted] is eligible for special education and related services, a team including the parents, will be convened to develop an individualized education program (IEP). Once the IEP is written, the team determines the placement in which the IEP will be implemented, with first consideration to placement in a setting with nondisabled children with appropriate aids and services.

For additional information about preschool special education programs in Arkansas, you may contact:

Dr. Diane Sydoriak
Associate Director of Special Education
Arkansas Department of Education
Department of Education Bldg., Room 105-C
#4 State Capitol Mall
Little Rock, AR 72201-1071

With regard to your SSI issue, the federal SSI office has informed us that individuals should follow all information provided from SSI regarding reclassification. Business should be conducted through your local Social Security office. General information about Social Security, including information about the location of the Social Security nearest you, can be obtained by calling 1-(800) 772-1213.

Please contact this Office if we can be of further assistance to you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Thomas Hehir".

Thomas Hehir
Director
Office of Special Education
Programs

cc: Dr. Diane Sydoriak