My son has Autism Spectrum Disorder. I can tell you what I did that was successful in getting him Protective Supervision. He was approved in three and a half months without needing to appeal. He got approved for 195 Protective Supervision hours.

About Protective Supervision

Protective Supervision is part of the IHSS program in California. It is for children and adults with a mental impairment that have self-harming and or dangerous behaviors that they engage in without regard to consequences. These behaviors must be regularly occurring and random. That is why they need someone to supervise them 24 hours a day 7 days a week to minimize injury to themselves.

An example of this behavior would be called eloping or wandering away. Many children with autism engage in this behavior. they will leave a safe space and go somewhere dangerous without realizing they could be seriously injured.

Other examples of behavior that some children exhibit that qualify for protective supervision are climbing up high, banging their head on the floors, walls or people, punching or slapping themselves in the face, scratching themselves until they bleed.

If your child engages in any of the examples I listed above or similar activities without regard to the consequence, you should pursue getting Protective Supervision.

Step One: Applying for IHSS

If you are not already in the IHSS program, or if you want to learn how to appeal IHSS hours, please take a look at: IHSS Nuts & Bolts

Step Two: Applying for Medi-Cal

If you are having trouble qualifying for Med-cal, or you are given a high Share of Cost, please take a look at: How to Avoid Share of Cost for Medi-cal and IHSS

Step Three: Applying for Protective Supervision

If you feel your family member might meet the qualifications, then call your social worker and ask for an assessment for protective supervision.

You have to remember these people have lots and lots of cases. At a bare minimum you should be calling every single week and checking in if you have an open case waiting for a decision. This is how my son got Protective Supervision quickly:
First make a Dangerous Behavior Log which is a list of any self-harming behaviors he has done over the past six to 12 months. Sample Dangerous Behaviors Log for IHSS Protective Supervision

Next print the IHSS SOC 821 protective supervision form and take it to the doctor that treats him along with the hazard log.

Do not mail in the form or drop it off. Sit in person with the doctor while he fills out the form and tell him to use your examples of self injurious behavior to write in the form. It’s best if most boxes are marked severe.

If your child is a client at a Regional Center, gather his Regional Center Individual Program Plan (IPP). Regional Centers provide services to people with developmental disabilities.

Also gather his Client Development Evaluation Report (CDER) from the Regional Center. It’s a summary of the clients abilities and issues.

Then get a copy of his Individualized Education Program (IEP) from your child’s school.

Now look through all three documents: IPP, CDER, and IEP. Look through them and see if it mentions any self-harming behavior your child engages in. Look for any self-harming behaviors noted and highlight them.

If there are behaviors he engages in that are not noted, you could call a meeting and have them added to his school and/or Regional Center reports.

Once you have all of the above completed, call your Social Worker and tell them that you are applying for protective supervision.

Tip: Keep track of every contact with IHSS that you have the date the time the person you spoke with and a summary of your conversation.

Meeting the Social Worker

When I met the Social Worker for the home assessment, I handed her the following:

Dangerous Behavior Log

Completed SOC 821 form

IEP with the items highlighted

CDER with the items highlighted

IPP with the items highlighted

Tip: Always make a complete copy of everything that you give to IHSS so you know what information they are looking at.

Appealing a Decision
If your case is denied, and you’re within the time frame to file an appeal, always try to do that first to preserve any back pay.

If you lose your appeal there’s another step beyond that you can try for. Otherwise you can always reapply—basically start a new case.

Generally though you would only want to reapply if you’ve exhausted all your other appeals first because if you reapply, then backpay would only be from your new application date.

More Tips from Readers

“We know our children best. Don’t be afraid to speak up. If you don’t sit with the doctor when the form is being filled out, problems can happen. I have a friend who gave the doctor the form to fill out when she wasn’t there. The doctor wrote down the wrong diagnosis and wrong information for many questions – I think he must have been looking at a different patient’s chart. This can hurt us and get our services cut. We have to advocate for our children”

“When I give my doctor a form, I always tell the doctor that this form will help my sister get benefits and services she needs. I also read the doctor my list of recent incidents and situations that would have been dangerous without constant supervision.”

"I brought two copies of the form to our doctor. One was blank and the other I filled out with the information to the best of my knowledge. I included examples of times when my daughter was in danger and why protective supervision would be needed. My doctor used this as a reference and found this helpful."

“I tell my doctor that the boxes on the form are not good enough to meet the needs of the IHSS supervisor, and that more description and specific examples of dangerous behaviors are needed so she can get the help she needs.”

“At least two areas must be marked “severe” by your doctor in order to qualify. There also needs to be a written explanation from the doctor. If your doctor won’t help, ask a different doctor.”

“If your child gets sent home from school for behavior problems, include documentation of this. Get documentation from the school. This shows that you need to be available even during school hours.”

“Focus on safety. List examples of how the child places himself in danger of getting injured. Give this list to your Social Worker, and also to your doctor. If your doctor does not fill out the form with enough detail, go back and bring your list and ask for more examples and details to be included.”

“Your doctor needs to know the times when you feel your child is not safe. Make sure to describe your child’s worst day. Please remember this when you talk to your doctor and social worker.”
“Many doctor’s hate paperwork and they don’t get paid for their time to fill out paperwork, unless it happens during an office visit. Before the doctor’s visit, I write down a list of everything the doctor needs to quickly fill out the form. This makes it easier for them. All of our doctors have appreciated this and have been helpful.”

“I went to a training class that taught me that I should fill out the form and bring it to my doctor to read and make changes and sign. My doctor said it was accurate. It matched his medical opinion, having observed my daughter over many years.”

“It helps if you can collect statements. Ask for statements that include examples of anything the child does that puts them at risk for being injured. Also, examples of problems with memory and judgement. Collect statements from teachers, doctors, therapists, psychologists, and any other professionals.”

**Learn More**

If someone in your family is on SSI, there are a bunch more things you might find helpful to know: [How to Survive on SSI](#)

From Disability Rights California: [IHSS Protective Supervision](#)

Connect with other families: [Facebook Groups for IHSS and Medicaid Home Care](#)