

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE WESTERN DISTRICT OF
ARKANSAS, FORT SMITH DIVISION

Candace Pilgrim o/b/o C.B.C. v. Frank Bisignano, Commissioner,
Social Security Administration

Pilgrim · No. 2:25-cv-02020 · Decided December 2, 2025

SUMMARY

The United States District Court for the Western District of Arkansas reviews the Commissioner of Social Security’s denial of child’s supplemental security income benefits to C.B.C., whose mother brought the action on his behalf. The court concludes that substantial evidence supports the administrative law judge’s findings that C.B.C.’s epilepsy did not meet, medically equal, or functionally equal a listed impairment. The court affirms the Commissioner’s decision and directs entry of judgment.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	United States District Court for the Western District of Arkansas, Fort Smith Division
WRITING FOR THE COURT	Spencer G. Singleton
JURISDICTION	United States District Court for the Western District of Arkansas, Fort Smith Division
DECIDED	December 2, 2025
DOCKET	2:25-cv-02020
DISPOSITION	affirmed
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	Plaintiff sought judicial review under 42 U.S.C. § 405(g) of the Commissioner's final decision denying C.B.C.'s application for child supplemental security income benefits.
STANDARD OF REVIEW	The court reviewed whether the Commissioner's findings were supported by substantial evidence in the record as a whole. It explained that substantial evidence is less than a preponderance but sufficient for a reasonable mind to find the evidence adequate, and that the court must affirm when substantial evidence supports the ALJ's decision even if contrary evidence also exists.
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	unknown

PARTIES

Candace Pilgrim o/b/o C.B.C. v. Frank Bisignano, Commissioner,
Social Security Administration

TOPICS

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PRACTICE AREAS

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QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether substantial evidence supported the ALJ's determination that C.B.C.'s epilepsy did not meet, medically equal, or functionally equal a listed impairment.
2. Whether the ALJ properly evaluated the six domains of functioning used to determine functional equivalence in a child disability claim.
3. Whether the ALJ properly considered C.B.C.'s medical records, education records, and his mother's statements and testimony.

HOLDINGS

1. The ALJ's decision denying benefits was supported by substantial evidence in the record as a whole and was affirmed.
2. C.B.C. did not establish that his epilepsy met Listing 111.02(A) or 111.02(B).
3. A child is functionally equivalent to a listed impairment when the child has marked limitations in two of the six regulatory domains or an extreme limitation in one domain.

KEY QUOTATIONS

“As long as there is substantial evidence in the record that supports the Commissioner’s decision, the Court may not reverse it simply because substantial evidence exists in the record that would have supported a contrary outcome or because the Court would have decided the case differently.” (Applicable Law)

“Based on the foregoing, the undersigned finds that the decision of the ALJ, denying benefits to Plaintiff is supported by substantial evidence and should be affirmed.” (Conclusion)

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

C.B.C., a minor, applied for supplemental security income based on childhood disability, alleging disability beginning October 1, 2019. The ALJ found epilepsy to be a severe impairment but determined that it did not meet, medically equal, or functionally equal a listed impairment. Although C.B.C. had experienced a seizure and medication side effects before the relevant period, the record showed that he was seizure-free without side

effects during the relevant period while taking Keppra. Medical records, school records, and testimony from C.B.C.'s mother were considered in evaluating the six functional domains.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

C.B.C.'s mother filed a childhood disability application on May 13, 2022. The Social Security Administration denied the application initially and on reconsideration; after administrative hearings on October 12, 2023, and March 12, 2024, the ALJ issued an unfavorable decision. The Appeals Council denied review on December 30, 2024. The district court reviewed the administrative record and affirmed the ALJ's decision.

DISPOSITION

affirmed

CASES CITED

- Ramirez v. Barnhart, 292 F.3d 576, 583 (8th Cir. 2002)
- Johnson v. Apfel, 240 F.3d 1145, 1147 (8th Cir. 2001)
- Haley v. Massanari, 258 F.3d 742, 747 (8th Cir. 2001)
- Young v. Apfel, 221 F.3d 1065, 1068 (8th Cir. 2000)