

What is Futures Planning or Special Needs Planning?

FUTURES PLANNING

Planning Now: A Future and Estate Planning Guide for Children and Adults with Developmental Disabilities. The Maryland Developmental Disabilities Council (2001, updates available). Download from The Council's website at www.md-council.org

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**For more information on topics discussed in this fact sheet, contact
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What do you want to happen for your young child or adult child in the future? What will happen when you are not here or cannot play the critical role you play today?

- What supports would you like to see in place?
- Will government benefits meet your child's needs?
- How can you help to provide the things that public benefits will not provide (like trips to visit relatives or memberships in local organizations or fees for activities your child enjoys), while preserving eligibility for important public benefits like health care or residential services?

Special Needs Planning is a process that helps people and families:

- Envision a full life and future for your child with a disability
- Identify the people, resources and services necessary to make that life a reality, and
- Appropriately document the plan so it can be implemented, now or in the future.

Special Needs Planning involves

- Legal Planning
- Financial Planning, and
- Life Planning.

Parents know that it is important to develop this plan, but often put it off. Current issues may seem more pressing. Resources may seem limited or unknown. Presumptions are made about large roles that siblings or other relatives will play or about the extent that public programs will "take care of things." Beginning is often hard.

Deep down, every parent knows that having this plan is critical. Planning gives you peace of mind. But equally importantly, special needs planning provides the people who will help to support your child with a road map, with information that often goes unspoken. It gives them your vision.

These fact sheets are designed to provide you with information and resources to make your plan. Planning is not just about financial resources, trusts or life insurance. Special needs planning is about helping you to identify and coordinate your friends and relatives, and line up professionals, and public and private resources to create the future that you want for your child.

These Fact Sheets are designed to provide general information only and are not designed to provide legal advice. Families and individuals are strongly urged to consult with an attorney and other appropriate professionals regarding their individual situation before taking action.