



Guardianship for Young Adults Transitioning to Adult Services

Shriners Hospitals for Children cares about you and early planning for your move from an under 17 years of age youth to a legal 18-year-old adult. As a minor, you managed financial, school, healthcare, transportation, housing, and basic household responsibilities as the legal guardian/parent. As your child turns eighteen years of age, they will then have the right to make legal decisions for themselves.

There is also a possibility that your child will not be prepared to manage these services at eighteen years of age or maybe never. There are options to assist you to support your child utilizing legal and non-legal services.

Formal Legal Options

- **Power of attorney (POA)** – provides legal healthcare, educational decision making only if your child understands what it means to sign the POA. (*Form 2848 for POA at [irs.gov](https://www.irs.gov)*)
- **Full guardianship** – legal tool for becoming the decision maker and advocate for a person unable to exercise their own legal rights after 18 years of age. <https://www.justice.gov>
- **Limited guardianship** – legally limits areas where person requires decision-making such as finances, education, healthcare, or housing, although person may be competent in other areas of decision-making.

Informal Options

- **Supported decision making agreement** – support your child to make decisions with a mutually trusted person in areas of education, finances, healthcare and living accommodations. In some states, supported decision-making is a legal option that permits greater independence than legal guardianship.

Financial Planning

- **Special Needs Trust** – Creating a Special Needs Trust will provide additional financial income or security for your child without risk of losing their benefits if they have an income or bank account greater than permitted if on a Supplemental Security Income (SSI). www.specialneedsalliance.org
- **Supplemental Security Income (SSI)** – Federal funding for people who are elderly, blind or have disabilities. <http://www.ssa.gov/planners/disability/dapply.html>
- Open a joint bank account or become a “representative payee,” to assist in bill paying.
- Creating your will for an alternate support person or guardian and providing a letter of intent to clarify if parent/designee or guardian are no longer able to provide support then who is the new designee and what are the agreed duties or responsibilities.

