

This is a list of guiding questions covering an array of life issues. The appropriateness of each question will depend on things like your child's age, the impact of his or her disability on independence and decision-making, and other individual circumstances.

Considering these questions will help you and your child think about what he or she wants and needs in the future. From there you can plan how to maximize the likelihood that these wants and needs are met. Your answers to the questions, and the goals that result, should guide you as you write your will and letter of intent, establish a trust (if desired), plan your finances, apply for services and benefits, and assist your child in other ways.

The questions are a starting point to focus your thinking. Your answers are the foundation of your plan. And wills, trusts, and the other tools discussed in this guide are the means to an end — the establishment of the life you and your child want, with the supports that are needed.

You don't have to write down the answers to all of these questions. Use them to guide discussions with your child, family and other important people in your lives. Include what seems most important in your letter of intent. This information will also help you plan with an attorney, financial planner, and other professionals.

### *Consider:*

1. What are my child's short and long term goals and dreams?
2. What are my, and my family's, wishes for my child (in the near and distant future)?
3. Can my child take care of himself/herself? What does he/she need assistance with? What kind of assistance and how much? What is the best way to provide the assistance? Can my child handle his/her own finances?
4. Does my child need assistance with decision-making? What types of decisions?
5. What do we want and need regarding the following things:
  - a. A place to live: What kind of living arrangement? Roommates? If so, what kind of roommate is important? (e.g., shares interests or keeps to self; neat; active)
  - b. Work or other meaningful, productive daytime activity: Are there interests and skills that my child has that should guide this decision? Training or education needed?
  - c. Opportunities to develop friendships and relationships.
  - d. Health care, dental care and therapies.
  - e. Equipment and assistive technology: Consider future replacement and upgrading needs for things like communication devices, wheelchairs, lift equipment. If our insurance covers these things now, will it when my child becomes an adult and moves out? If my child is, or later becomes, eligible for Medicaid or Medicare, will they cover these costs?
  - f. Other supports and services (e.g., behavioral support).
  - g. Recreational and leisure activities; vacations.

- h. Social and religious activities; Other interests and activities my child would like to pursue.
  - i. Transportation: In many areas of Maryland, public transportation cannot meet the needs of people with disabilities. Do we need to budget for transportation costs?
6. Will the impact of my child's disability change over time, necessitating additional or different services and supports? A degenerative physical disability, for example, could lead to a person who walks now and takes care of his personal needs requiring a wheelchair and personal assistance in the future, as well as accessibility modifications to his home.
  7. What supports and services will be needed to make these things possible?
  8. Who are the important people in my child's life? (e.g., family members, friends, neighbors, church/synagogue affiliations) What roles do they play now, and what support will they play in my child's life in the future? (e.g., advocacy, service monitoring, emotional support, assistance with activities like shopping or budgeting, or social activities).
  9. What supports and services will be needed from service provider agencies? What type agency would best meet my child's needs and would provide services the way we want?
  10. If our ideal plan can't be implemented for some reason, what are the most important things?
  11. What public benefits is my child eligible for now or will likely be eligible for in the future? Which of my child's needs will these benefits assist with?
  12. What estimated costs related to the wishes and goals we have identified will likely not be covered by government benefits like SSI or Medicaid, insurance, or state programs like the Developmental Disabilities Administration and Division of Rehabilitation Services?
  13. What other assets does my child have to plan with (or might be expected in the future)? For example, inheritance, insurance proceeds, lawsuit settlement, SSDI benefits once parent retires.
  14. What financial assets do I have to plan with for the benefit of my child?
  15. What other information is important for us to consider?