

Contact the Securities Division of the Office of the Attorney General (410-576-6360) to obtain a “Financial Advisor Interview Checklist.” You can use the checklist yourself during an interview or ask potential advisors to complete and return it to you as a way to screen them.

Some Questions to Consider:

(Make note of the rapport you initially develop in addition to the information you receive)

■ ***What credentials do you have to practice financial planning?***

Financial planners come from a variety of backgrounds so they hold a variety of degrees and licenses. Those that take specialized training earn specific credentials. Be certain that the planner you choose has ample knowledge of taxes, insurance, estate and retirement planning issues, as well as the basics of investments and family budgeting.

■ ***Are you registered with the Securities Division of the Office of the Attorney General?***

All financial planners must register. Ask for a copy of “Form ADV, Part II” which has information about the planner’s background. Advisors are required to disclose information to you.

■ ***What areas do you specialize in?***

■ ***Have you worked with clients with similar financial situations as mine?***

■ ***What knowledge and experience do you have with families who have a member with a disability?***

Ideally, your planner would have knowledge and experience planning with families with children who have disabilities.

■ ***How long have you been practicing financial planning? How do you keep up with the latest financial developments?***

You may want to select a planner who enrolls in continuing education courses.

■ ***Do you offer services that fit my income bracket and investment strategy?***

■ ***How will you prepare my financial plan? How extensive is it? Do you provide a written analysis of my financial situation and recommendations? Are the recommendations for specific investment products?***

Be sure to find an advisor who will give you personalized advice for your situation.

■ ***Do you provide assistance with implementation?***

■ ***Will you be involved in evaluating and updating the plan you suggest?***

Some planners include provisions for updating your plan to adjust for changing circumstances. A financial planner can periodically review your plan to show you the progress being made toward your goals. Ask about the fee for this service.

■ ***How are you compensated for various services?***

■ ***Will you provide references?***

Ask for references from clients with at least three years experience with the planner and call them. If possible, get references from clients that have similar situations, such as personal circumstances, income bracket, and/or investment philosophy.