



Understanding Guardianship

If your son or daughter will be turning 18 in the next year or so, you may be concerned about his/her ability to make decisions independently. Thinking about guardianship may be your next step.

- A guardian is a person, institution or agency appointed by the courts to manage the affairs of another individual.
- An appointed guardian becomes the substitute decision maker for a person with disabilities who is 18 years of age or older.
 - If those disabilities prevent that individual from making or communicating responsible decisions about his/her personal affairs, the guardian acts on his/her behalf.
- Guardians can serve as either a full or partial guardian role. Full guardianship should only be used when the person with a disability truly cannot make any decisions for himself/herself.
- Guardians can make medical, financial and personal decisions. Remember, parents should consider guardianship only as a last resort.
- The guardianship process can take a long time to get in place, depending on the length of time needed to complete the paperwork and to wait for a court date.
 - It is recommended to start the process about one year prior to your child's 18th birthday.
 - However, the paperwork can not be filed until the child is actually 18 years old.
- Medical forms must be completed within three months of filing the petition.
- Forms and petitions for guardianship are filed through each county's Circuit Court Clerk.
 - Visit <http://www.state.il.us/court/default.asp> to find your Circuit Court Clerk's contact information.
 - Guardianship forms are often available on the Circuit Court's website under the Probate Division.

Information Regarding Guardianship

- Visit the Adult Guardianship Help Desk at the Daley Center, 12th floor, M-F, 8:30am- 4:30 pm for paperwork and assistance to complete forms.
- Illinois Guardianship and Advocacy Commission: 866-274-8023 or go to <http://gac.state.il.us/guardfaq.html>
- For additional guardianship support contact The Arc of Illinois at 708- 206-1390 or go to www.thearcofil.org

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