



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 cannot 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

For Cook County, visit the Adult Guardianship Help Desk at the Daley Center, 12th floor, M-F, 8:30am- 4:30pm 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 815-464-1832 or go to www.thearcofil.org

The information included in this document is for informational purposes only and is not intended to substitute in any way for medical education, training, treatment, advice, or diagnosis by a healthcare professional. A qualified healthcare professional should always be consulted before making any healthcare-related decision