

# Special needs children

What to consider as you plan for their future





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You understand the challenges and joys of caring for a child with special needs. Ensuring their proper care is a constant concern. Working with your financial professional, you can create a long-term financial strategy to provide for your child when you no longer can.

# Special needs require special strategies

Every parent worries about their children and the day when they can't be there to support them. For parents of special needs children, thinking about what the future holds is especially difficult. Who will take care of your child? What financial resources will they need?

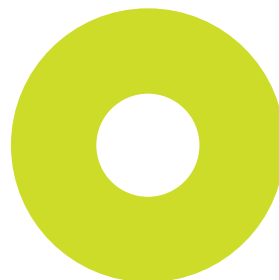
Whether your family is facing physical, mental or emotional disabilities – and the need for ongoing medical care; physical, occupational or speech therapies; and special educational support – you can take steps to prepare. And you have help.

## **When it comes to planning, you're not alone**

Your financial professional can help identify your financial needs and goals – and map out solutions that work for your family. Turn the page to learn more about your options and what to consider as you outline your wishes for your child's future care.

Be sure to check out the simple, five-step action plan you can start today (see page 5). By taking the time now to put a plan in place, you can help ensure their adult living environment meets their unique needs. And allows them to maintain a degree of independence.

**By taking time today,  
you can plan for a  
better tomorrow.**



# Why you need a personalized estate plan

Several factors make developing and implementing a personalized estate plan particularly important for families with special needs children:

## People are living longer

Life expectancy for adults with disabilities continues to increase. Not only must parents and guardians financially prepare for the rest of their own lives, they must also factor in the life of their child with special needs.

## Care resources need to last

Your child may qualify for federal and state government programs, such as Social Security Income (SSI) and Medicaid, which provide resources for basic care and living needs. However, there are very strict income limitations.

These resources may not be enough to maintain the standard of living you want for your child. Private funding can help, but careful planning is needed to ensure their income will last a lifetime.

## The court could make care decisions if you don't

As a caregiver, if you do not outline who will fulfill caretaking responsibilities, your child could become a **ward of the court** when you die. Once this happens, the court decides who cares for them and how financial support will be provided.

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## Life insurance: A smart solution

There are many ways life insurance can financially help families with special needs children:

- **The tax-free death benefit can provide financial support** to ensure the lifestyle you have created for your family remains intact even after you're gone.
- **Cash value can be a valuable tool** for current and future costs of raising a child with special needs. The cash value has the potential to grow tax-deferred and become a source of cash to supplement future financial needs.
- **Additional agreements may enhance your life insurance policy** to address each of your goals – from providing for your own care to customizing the death benefit payout.

# Building your child's future begins now

The future quality of your child's life may greatly depend upon your willingness to properly prepare today. There are many factors involved with special needs estate planning. These five important steps can help you take action and make critical decisions:



## Step one: Choose your team

Choose a team of dedicated professionals who are knowledgeable about your family's specific concerns. Your team should include family members, an attorney, a social worker and a financial professional. Choose professionals with special needs planning expertise – people who understand fiduciary requirements, government benefits and tax laws.



## Step two: Assess your needs

As part of your financial strategy, set short- and long-term goals. Think about how much money you need, as well as what is needed to support your loved one. Your financial professional will be able to help you determine this amount.



## Step three: Prepare and implement your strategy

As you work with various professionals to create your financial strategy, think about the lifestyle you want for your family member. Consider how much that lifestyle will cost, and take steps to ensure the proper resources will be available to make it happen.



## Step four: Write your vision down

Put your wishes in writing to reduce guesswork for future caregivers or trustees. If you are the parent or guardian, use a Letter of Intent to direct your family member's caregiver upon your death.



## Step five: Review regularly

Go over these steps periodically to make sure they're still on track to reach your family's goals. Review them at least annually, perhaps using your family member's birthday as a reminder.

### Try these questions as guidelines:

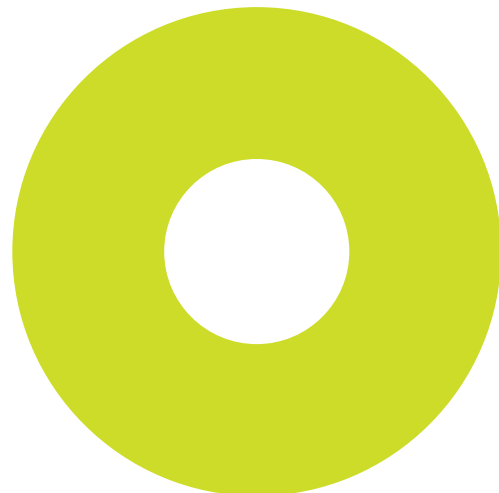
- Have there been health or benefit eligibility changes?
- Did your family's financial situation change?
- Are the members of your financial team current and relevant?
- If you've established a Special Needs Trust, are appropriate assets owned by the trust, or do they identify the trust as the beneficiary?
- What changes need to be made to reach your family's goals?

# Common estate planning terms

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<b>Power of Attorney (POA)</b>	Gives another person the legal right to handle some or all of your financial affairs if you are unable to do so.
<b>Letter of Intent</b>	An informal document to direct future caregivers and trustees. Although not legally binding, it can provide detailed instructions and an easier transition for your loved one.
<b>Living will</b>	A document that provides direction to health care providers if you become incapacitated or terminally ill. A living will specifies whether you want certain life-prolonging measures taken, including respirators, pain medication, hydration, nutrition, etc.
<b>Trust</b>	A legal document directing the management and distribution of assets placed in the trust, for the benefit of an individual.
<b>Special Needs Trust</b>	Also referred to as Supplemental Needs or Third Party Trusts. These trusts hold title to assets specifically for the benefit of a child or adult with a mental, emotional or physical disability. Such a trust will manage a variety of resources, while maintaining public assistance eligibility.
<b>Ward of the court</b>	An individual who is unable to care for him or herself, such that the court (government) must assume responsibility for his or her well-being (e.g., minor children or an adult who suffers mental incapacity)

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## **PRESERVE THE POWER OF YOUR LOVE**

Taking the time to prepare now for your child's financial future is one of the best gifts you can give your family. It also gives you comfort in knowing you've done all you can to make sure the right amount of support and resources are in place to last a lifetime.



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we're here for family.  
And we're here  
because of it.**

Family doesn't have to branch from your tree, but it always shares your roots. Roots woven by common understanding, shared values and mutual respect. Those who believe a rewarding life is really about being present in the here and now, and that your financial picture should support the everyday moments as much as the major milestones. That's why our insurance, investment and retirement solutions give you the confidence to focus on what's truly valuable: banking memories with those who matter most.



## Learn more

Contact your financial professional today and create a lasting financial strategy for your children with special needs.

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Life insurance products contain fees, such as mortality and expense charges (which may increase over time), and may contain restrictions, such as surrender periods.

Policy loans and withdrawals may create an adverse tax result in the event of lapse or policy surrender, and will reduce both the surrender value and death benefit. Withdrawals may be subject to taxation within the first fifteen years of the contract. You should consult your tax advisor when considering taking a policy loan or withdrawal.

Guarantees are based on the claims-paying ability of the issuing insurance company.

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