



LIGHTING THE WAY

TO YOUR CHOICES, YOUR DECISIONS, AND YOUR LIFE

PARTNERS

Agency for Persons with Disabilities

Disability Rights Florida

Guardian Pooled Trust

Office of Public Guardian, Inc

Statewide Public Guardianship Office



This document was commissioned, funded and sponsored by the Florida Developmental Disabilities Council, Inc. and produced through funding provided by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities.

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Introduction

Every person who is age eighteen or older has certain legal rights. As an adult, you can exercise these rights by making your own decisions or asking someone to help you make decisions.

You should be very careful when you ask someone to help you. You should only ask someone you know very well and trust; someone who has never done anything to hurt you.





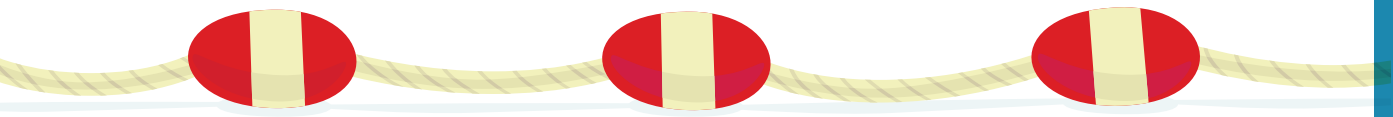
Making Your Own Decisions

You have the right to be a part of every decision made about you.

While you are in school, your parents or guardian may help with school decisions. When you become eighteen years old, you can ask your parents or anyone you trust to help you make decisions. Or, you can make decisions without any help.

As an adult, here is a list of rights that you have:

- To Apply For Governmental Services
- To Be Admitted Into A Medical Facility
- To Contract
- To Have an Attorney Represent You
- To Go Into Court And Let A Judge Hear Your Problems
- To Decide Where To Live
- To Get A Divorce
- To Apply for a Driver's License
- To Receive A Proper Education
- To Participate in Medical Experiments



- To Be Free From Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation
- To Remain As Independent As Possible
- To Manage Your Money
- To Marry
- To Make Medical Decisions
- To Find A Job
- To Receive Services To Help You
- To Decide About Social Activities
- To Decide Whether You Want An Abortion or Whether You Want To Be Sterilized
- To Participate In A Lawsuit
- To Decide Whether You Want To Be A Parent
- To Travel
- To Be Treated With Respect
- To Vote

Supported Decision-Making

Here are different ways people can help you use your rights and help support you when you are making decisions about your life.



Banking Services – You can choose the bank you want to use. You can ask someone to put their name on your bank account with you so they can help you manage your money. You can learn how to pay your bills using online banking or you can ask someone to do it for you.

Power of Attorney – You can ask someone to make decisions for you. You choose that person and you decide what areas of your life the person can make decisions about. The person you choose can manage your money, sign contracts for you or

do whatever you ask them to do. You put these decisions in writing called a power of attorney. An attorney can help you write a power of attorney. If you change your mind, you can cancel the power of attorney.

Representative Payee – If you receive social security income, the Social Security Administration can appoint another person to receive and manage your monthly benefit. That person is called a representative payee. The representative payee can be someone you know or it can be an organization.

The representative payee must use the social security income for your benefit only. The representative payee must also keep records to show how your money was used.

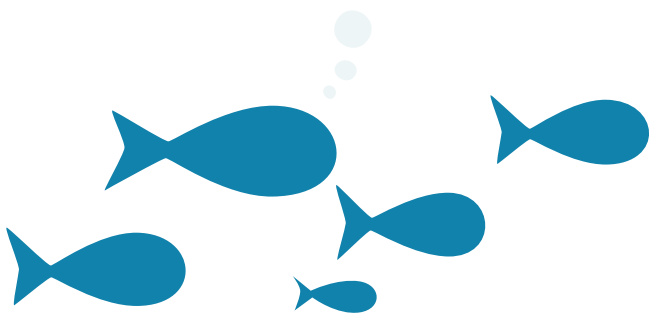


Health Care Surrogate –

You can choose the person you want to make medical decisions for you if you become unable to make your own medical decisions, but only under certain circumstances.

Medical Proxy – If you do not choose a person to make your medical decisions when you cannot make them, then the law allows another person to make those decisions for you.

Trusts – Trusts are used to hold money or property. A trustee is the person who decides how the money will be spent, but the money must be spent for things you need. A lawyer is needed to write the trust.



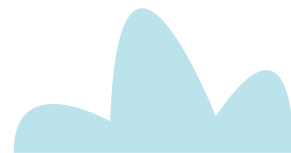
Rights You Keep Even In Guardianship

Although guardianship removes some of your legal rights, here is a list of rights that you keep even in a guardianship:

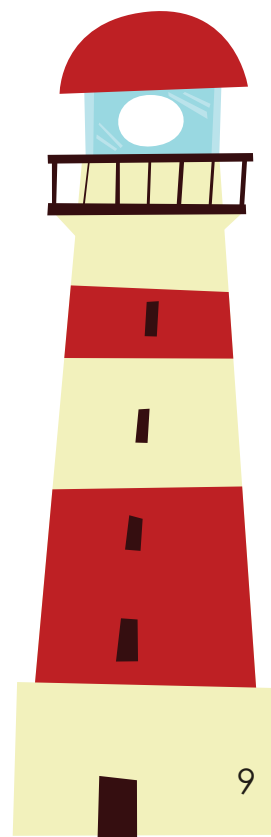
- To have the court review the guardianship each year.
- To have your rights restored as soon as possible.
- To be treated with dignity and respect.
- To be protected against abuse, neglect and exploitation.
- To have a qualified guardian.
- To remain as independent as possible.
- To have your wishes honored as long as they are reasonable.
- To be properly educated.
- To have your finances managed properly.
- To be told how your finances are being managed.
- To receive services that will better your life.
- To be free from discrimination.
- To access the courts.
- To have an attorney represent you.
- To receive visitors and communicate with other people.
- To receive notices of court hearings.



Restoration – If you are in a guardianship, you can ask the judge at any time to give you some or all of your rights back. This is called restoration of rights. The judge will name a doctor to examine you and give an opinion on whether you still need guardianship. You will have an opportunity to explain to the judge why you want your rights restored.



It is important for you to learn about your legal rights as well as learn how to use them in a responsible manner. Responsibility involves being dependable, doing the right things and learning from your mistakes.





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