


10 Basic Financial Steps For Special Needs Caregivers

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CRN202202-207531

1

Important Documents



Our Letter of Intent for our Loved One

Texas Medicaid Waiver Programs

Texas Medicaid waivers are a gateway to getting services for your child. We don't want to tell you what to do, but we strongly suggest that you consider adding your child to the waiver interest list(s), which many parents call "waiting lists," if you haven't already done so.

Even if you hope your child will never need those services, it is important that they be added to the interest list for any program(s) that might meet their needs. Your child might have to wait a long time to get services through the waiver. You can always decline the services once your child moves to the top of the list.

Many parents say they wish they had signed up for the waiver interest list when their child was born or first diagnosed. Some of the interest lists have more than a 15-year wait time.

We know this page has a lot of information for you to take in, it's okay if you don't absorb everything here in one visit. Take a deep breath and come back as much as you want or need to.

What Are Waivers and How Do They Work?

- Waivers let states use Medicaid funds for long-term home and community-based services for people with disabilities or special health-care needs to help them live in the community.
- Before the creation of waiver programs, people had to live in hospitals, nursing homes, or other institutions like State Supported Living Centers or Residential Treatment Centers so Medicaid would pay for long-term services.
- Some of the services you can get with a waiver are:
 - Personal care for help with things like bathing or dressing
 - Nursing care
 - Home modifications like ramps
 - Car modifications
 - Respite care
 - Certain therapies
- They get named "waivers" because certain Medicaid requirements are waived (meaning they don't apply). For example, family income. All but one waiver is based on just the child's income alone. Your child's income means any money that they personally have earned or are paid—not your whole family's income.
- Besides getting these additional services, people who receive waiver long-term services and supports also get full Medicaid health-care benefits. This is a huge help for children and adults who have complicated medical needs and no other health insurance.

This information is provided as a courtesy of SpecialCare Planning. Contact us with any questions! 202-268-6353 | waivers@specialcareplanning.com

2

What's Important To You As A Caregiver?

As the caretaker of a dependent with special needs, you're the one who is looking out for their best interests.



What happens when you're not around?

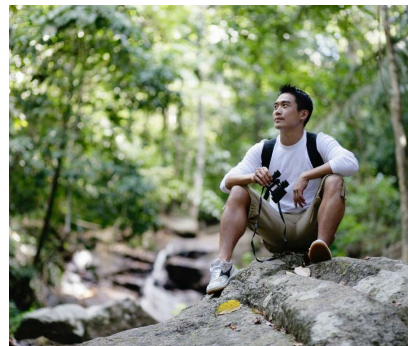
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3

Step 1: What is your Vision

Plan for the future needs of your dependent

- Medical treatments
- Transportation
- Education
- Employment
- Housing



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4

Step 2: Build A Team

Variety of Guidance Needs

- Financial Professional
- Special Needs Attorney
- Health Professional
- Guidance Counselor



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5

Step 3: Government Benefits Public Assistance vs. Entitlement Benefits

Public Assistance

- Supplemental Security Income (SSI)
- Medicaid
- Public Supports:
 - Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)
 - Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)
 - Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP)

Entitlement

- Social Security Retirement Income
- Family Benefits
- Medicare
- Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI)
- Survivor Benefit
- Disabled Adult Child Benefit (DAC)

Government benefits may help provide medical treatments, supplies, equipment, financial assistance, etc.

For more information regarding benefits provided Medicaid (Medi-CAL in California) visit www.medicaid.gov. Medicaid guidelines vary by state. Contact your local Medicaid office for details. For more information on SSI visit www.ssa.gov.

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6

Step 4: Get Additional Resource Support



- Local non-profits
- Government agencies
- Advocacy Groups

7

7

Step 5: Legal Structure and Considerations

- Prepare Letter of Intent
- Guardianship and Alternatives
 - Choose Successor Caregivers, Guardian(s) & Trustee(s)
- Wills
- Advanced Medical Directives
- Durable General Powers of Attorney
- Estate Planning
- Trusts
- Titling – Ownership, Beneficiaries, TOD and POD
- Special Needs Trusts (SNTs)
- Remember to review and update periodically
- Use a Special Needs Attorney

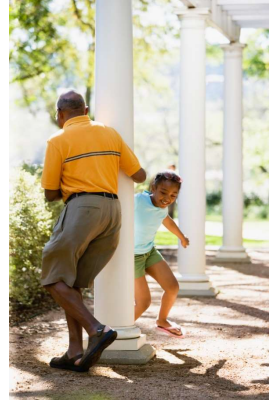
**National Special Needs Attorney Groups:
The Academy of Special Needs Planners
The Special Needs Alliance**

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Step 6: Special Needs Trust

- How does it protect my dependent's government benefit eligibility?
- What can it provide?
- Are there restrictions?
- SNT v. ABLE Account

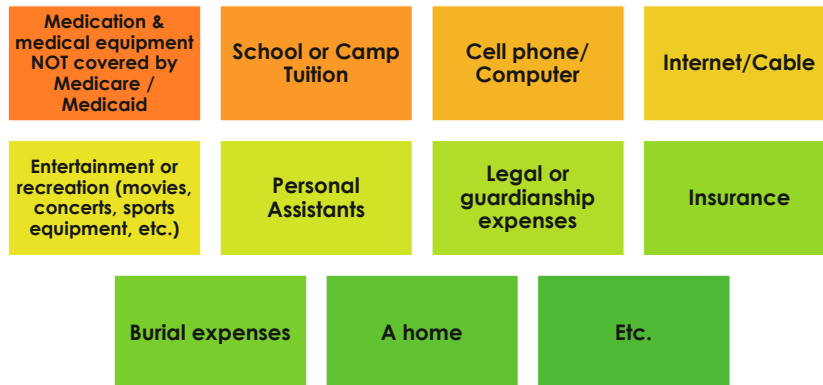


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9

Expenses Special Needs Trusts Can Cover

SNTs can be used for expenses not already covered by government benefits, such as:



❖ 10

10

Step 7: Review Beneficiaries

Review beneficiary designations with family and close friends

- Assets (cash, art, jewelry, etc.) worth more than \$2,000
- Inheritance
- Insurance benefits
- Not all assets are directed by the Will



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11

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Step 8: Guardianship and Alternatives

- Full Guardianship
- Limited Guardianship
- Financial
- Healthcare
- If my dependent is over 18, what changes?
- Supported Decision Making
- Power of Attorney

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12

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YES, I Have a Plan!

- Once you have your plan in place, you need to communicate that plan with everyone involved.
- How do you ensure the kind of care you would personally give your dependent?



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13

Step 9: The Letter of Intent

- What is it?
- Why does my dependent need one?
- How do I create one?



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14

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Step 10: Family Meeting

- Have a family meeting to discuss future needs
- Discuss concerns and future care options



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My Next Step



- Get on the Waiver Interest Lists
 - [NavigateLifeTexas.org](https://www.navigateLifeTexas.org)



- Financial Professional with a focus on Special Needs

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16

16

**Make Your
Dependent's
Future More
Secure**

Please complete the survey
to help us improve our
presentations for families like
yours!

Contact Us
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SpecialCare Planning

