



Special Needs Planners: A Safe Beacon in the Storm

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Special needs planners provide expert legal planning and advocacy to and on behalf of families with loved ones who have special needs. They have in-depth knowledge of government benefits, regulations, and laws, pending legislation, and the legal expertise to uniquely make a huge difference in families' lives. The passion of special needs planners is the key to their work. For those of us who are also parents of a special needs child, that passion is as unique as the lives that are served, and we bring real-life experiences to the planning process and a deep understanding of the daily issues.

Parents with special needs children go through an emotional process that continues throughout the child's lifetime. This process starts with the diagnosis stage, which triggers a repetitive cycle that may look like this: Why Me? → Denial → Anger → Guilt → Depression → Accepting → Grieving → Adapting to Daily Living → Finding Joy and Peace (the "emotional cycle").

Special needs planners recognize that it is quite common for parents to go through this cycle at different stages of their child's life, depending on what is happening to the child and the family. A special needs planner who pinpoints which part of this cycle a client is in often helps shape a family's short-term and/or long-term planning. The role of an attorney for a family with a special needs child is to guide parents through the current and future needs of the child, often providing unique approaches and planning options based on the family's goals and where they are in the emotional cycle.

Special needs planners recognize this Emotional Cycle and understand that parents of a child with special needs feel that each day they are caretakers, chaos managers, therapists, nurses, paramedics, insurance professionals, durable medical equipment experts, community planners, advocates, special education experts, financial advisors, lawyers, adult services experts, and possess a keen skill to change lanes at the drop of a hat.

Understanding the challenges parents of a child with special needs face and the best way to incorporate assistance from community partners, government agencies, and experts in

the child's special needs requires knowledge of all the roles parents are wearing. Parents will find that engaging a special needs planner will be comforting and that the complex intricacies of the special needs puzzle can result in a completed puzzle while also feeling relief that they are supported throughout the emotional cycle.

Overall, special needs planners serve as a safe beacon in the storm. Parents are essential partners in planning for their children's current and future needs. Parents know best the "secret sauce" that unlocks their child's potential and strengthens their self-esteem. Although dreams for their child may differ from what parents initially expected, a special needs planner can help meet their current dreams with appropriate planning and resources. After all, "alone we can do so little; together we can do so much" — Helen Keller.

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