



Answers To Essential Questions Every Parent Should Know.

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4 Essential Planning Tips for Parents of Adult Children With Autism

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What Will Happen to Our Autistic Child When We Are no Longer around to Support Him?

This is a critical area of concern for all [parents of special needs children](#), an issue that causes great anxiety and stress for most. We all hope our children will be able to lead independent lives but many parents of children on the autistic spectrum are afraid this may not happen. Parents need to focus their efforts on encouraging their child to become a productive member of society by gaining employment, and the parents need to take the appropriate actions to assure their financial matters are in order to assure proper funding of their child

Here are four steps you can take now to start preparing for when you are no longer around to care for your autistic adult son or daughter.

1. **Vocational Skills Training:** It is important that your adult child receive training from qualified professionals to teach the skills necessary to find and keep a job. This is essential for your child to enjoy a more independent future. Vocational skills training will instill the confidence your adult child needs to enter the workforce and become a productive member of the community. We believe this training can best be accomplished through techniques and procedures that are based on Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA), the only scientifically proven method for training people on the autism spectrum.
2. **Get Wills and Trusts in Order:** Whether or not your child will ever be able to live independently or work productively, it is essential that you think and plan carefully about his or her financial security. A recent study by Easter Seals and the Massachusetts Mutual Life Insurance Company found that 74 percent of parents fear their children with autism will not have enough financial support after the parents die. It is critical for both parents to have wills that are coordinated with other legal documents, such as your child's trust. We recommend that you consult with a skilled legal and financial professional, with specific experience in dealing with cases involving children with special needs.
3. **Third Party Special Needs Trust:** You may also consider establishing a "Third Party Special Needs Trust" in your living trust or will. This trust would not be under the control of your adult child, and he or she would not be able to revoke it and use the assets for his or her own purposes. This trust would have an independent trustee and would exist for the lifetime of your child. The basic reason families set up such trusts is to provide benefits through the trust to a disabled beneficiary who would otherwise lose their eligibility for Supplemental Security Income (SSI) or Medicaid (Medi-Cal in California). We recommend that you consult with an attorney if you are considering setting up a Third Party Special Needs Trust.
4. **Letter of Intent:** It is also important to write a letter of intent that details essential information about your child with autism. The letter of intent offers guidance to courts and other individuals for interpreting your desired care instructions. The letter usually includes; (1) information about your adult child's medical history,(2) emergency contacts,(3) living arrangements,(4) education or work situations, (5)recreation and leisure activities, (6) challenging behaviors, and (7) a summary of family contacts and financial information.

Early planning is the key to creating the best scenario possible for your autistic son or daughter's future. This is particularly true for when you are no longer available to take care of him or her.

Please contact us at (818) 646-6650 for a **FREE consultation** to discuss your individual situation.



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