

Special Needs Letter of Intent Worksheet

Use this worksheet to help you arrive at a letter of intent to be created for the people who will be responsible for carrying on your child's care after your lifetime. It should be given to your child's guardian and trustee, as well as the likely successor guardians and trustees and any other people who may act as advisors to the guardian. The letter is usually written, but you can also use a recorded audio or videotaped message if you prefer.

The letter of intent should give a good introduction to your child, their medical history, their family, and your child's personality. But the letter is also an opportunity for you, the parent (s), to describe the kind of life you want your child to have.

Each of the areas below will help you arrive at a description of how you envision different parts of your child's life, which you should then be able to put down in your letter of intent to guide the decisions of the guardian and trustee for your child.

You may want to get feedback from other family members when you are creating this letter. They might be able to help you think of important information to include, and they can also help you brainstorm your vision of the future.

This letter of intent should be reviewed and updated regularly. Once a year is a good idea, and you can put a date to review the letter on your calendar as soon as you finish it.

And remember, although this letter will be full of facts, what you are really doing is giving your child the opportunity to continue to feel your love and care throughout their entire lifetime.

Vital statistics and medical history

You should include a section of the basic facts – birthdate, size, clothing sizes, physical and mental capacity, and medical history. This section should also include names and contact info for all doctors and other caregivers, social workers, and caseworkers involved with your child. Also list the child's family members, contact info, and any information about the relationship the child has with each person.

Residential Arrangements

Talk about not only how your child lives now, but your preferences for the future.

Family setting-----Neighborhood setting-----Institutional setting

Greater independence -----greater support

Care and Supervision

How much involvement do your child's current caregiver's have in her or his life, and how much would you like them to have in the future?

Guardian: responsible for carrying on your wishes for your child; represents your child in society and makes decisions on healthcare, social and welfare issues;

Trustee: manages the child's financial resources; disburses money in accordance with the plan directives, the advice of the guardian, and in compliance with the law

The Guardian can be heavily involved in every decision affecting your child, or can act as a safety net to help guide the child's own decisions and be sure harmful decisions are not made by others.

Lifestyle

How does your child live? In the future, how do you hope your child will live?

- Social activities – How does your child socialize, and what are your preferences for your child? Does your child like to be surrounded by peers? Does your child like alone time? Does your child prefer one on one activities?
- Leisure time – what does your child like to do? What activities or things do you want your child to have access to?
- Eating – does your child have favorite foods, favorite restaurants?

- What kinds of things do you want your child to have? The latest electronic gadgets? Internet? Books? Stuffed animals? Nice clothes? Spending money they can use however they want?
- Does your child have a job? What kind of job skills training would you like your child to have? What else does your child do with her or his days?

Life skills

What things can your child do for him or herself, what do you want them to have help with, and what things would you like your child to get better at? Does your child need special adaptations for some activities?

Spirituality

How do you want your child's spiritual and religious life handled? Does your child have religious beliefs? Does your child attend a church? If so, include the church schedule and names of the pastor or other persons with whom your child interacts.

Medical Care

What is your philosophy on medical care for your child? Should the guardian seek out new treatments and therapies, or should treatments be used as necessary – or somewhere in between?

Behavior

Describe your child's temperament and any behavioral challenges, as well as how those challenges have been handled in the past and currently.