

Divorce Checklists for Special Needs Children

Checklist A:

Visitation Checklist

- Medicines and non prescription supplements / treatments
- Medical equipment
- Modified equipment
 - Ramp
 - Gait belt
 - Stander
 - Walker
 - Wheelchair / Stroller
 - Leg Braces / Orthotics
 - Communication Aids: Assistive technology, symbol cards, recording devices
 - Visual Aids
 - Audio Aids
 - Headphones
 - DVD players & special movies / visuals
 - CD players & special music / books on tape
 - Bed rails
 - Monitors
 - Backpacks/ Fanny packs / ID carry holder
 - Pillows, bed pads, waterproof aids
 - Kitchen aids for processing meals
 - Environmental control devices and switches
 - Special clothing (diapers, support hose, shoes, etc.)
- Emergency Contact List
- List of Medicines, Medical History, Allergies, Preferred Hospital & Pharmacy
- Letter of Authorization to Act with Power of Attorney in Medical Emergency

Checklist B:

Parenting Plan Checklist

Have the parents each develop a “MAP” of the child’s future quality of life:

Mapping is the process of creating a written plan of action to help parents achieve the best possible future for their child. The written plan is not fixed. It is an ever-changing flexible blue print. It adjusts according to need and ever-changing circumstances. It describes what is important to and for the child in everyday life. It includes information about the child’s likes and dislikes; important people in their life; dreams; etc.

- Have a place where it is all written down
- Help others to know the child better (used by people who support)
- Help with long-term planning and life transitions (e.g. school to work)
- Figure out what is important to a person and what types of supports make sense.
- Use info to create supports and recruit providers of services
- Remind parents where they’ve been and where they’re going
- Determine a course of action (continually changing) to achieve long- term goals
- A just in case plan

Create a practical process for resolving differences between parents concerning nature, degree and delivery of treatments and interventions for educational, medical, behavioral, cognitive, physical, emotional, developmental needs of the child. Will they submit their disputes to arbitration, court jurisdiction, a family relative, a school official, a medical professional, etc?

Enable parents to process the disability and ensure they access the abundance of resources that exist from organizations, schools, doctors, the internet, parent support groups, etc.

Create a full and extensive list of the special needs child's supports and services:

- Daily schedule
- Service providers
- Insurance coverage and access to claims processing and reimbursements
- Routine reimbursable insurance claims that need to be filed and when / where
- Non-routine items requiring pre approval and deadlines for submittal : when / where
- Tracking reimbursements and explanation of benefit statements from insurers
- Tracking out of pocket items
- Application forms and deadlines for applying for Social Security or other Agency benefits (depending on disability)
- Redetermination / renewals for such benefits if eligible
- Involvement directly with school / special education system: consultants, teachers, IEP Team (Individual Educational Planning Team mandated under federal legislation IDEA that sets forth substantive and procedural rights for children with disabilities and their parents)
- Repetition and timing of ongoing or repeat assessments for requalification of supports & services as required
- Assignment of who is responsible for legal, medical and educational decisions
- Training of noncustodial parent in the needs and care of their child
- Modification of noncustodial home and environment as required for visitation
- Supervision by or availability of additional person (knowledgeable about the special needs child) to accompany the child when travelling between parents as needed
- Estate planning for their child: conservator, guardian, advocate, trustee, fiduciary, etc.

Resources for Families:

- Sample Letter of Intent:** A checklist that shows parents how to communicate their wishes and knowledge about their child with a disability to future care givers
- Special Needs Estate Planning Guidance System:** Information to help families understand the special needs planning process and work with qualified attorneys; includes state specific information, resources, and protocols
- A Family Handbook on Future Planning:** A handbook from the ARC that helps families develop future plans for their children with cognitive, intellectual or developmental disabilities that include protections after parents die or can no longer provide care or support
- Guardianship: Your Rights:** All people have a right to self-determination. Information about the practical, day to day exercise of the right to self determination for all persons with disabilities.

Checklist C:

Child Support and Financial Issues:

- Child Support Guidelines Amount
- Deviation Considerations:
 - Insurances:
 - Cost of medical, dental, vision insurances
 - Cost of un-reimbursable expenses
 - Deductible
 - Out of pocket expenses
- Orthodontia
- Elective surgery
- Nursing services
- Specialized child care / respite care
- Specialized transportation
- Modifications to homes
- Parent training
- Siblings child care
- Legal fees / Advocacy expenses
- Special dietary / nutritional foods
- Therapies:
 - Behavioral
 - Massage
 - Cranial Sacral
 - Hippo therapy
 - Aquatic therapy
 - Oral Motor
- Private Tuition / Room & Board
 - Tutoring / mentoring
 - Habilitation services (Residential and nonresidential) / facility / group home / roommate expenses
- Special Camps
- After school programs
- Electronics
- Adaptive devices and furniture
- Recreational programs
- Social programs
- Transitional programs
- Vocational programs / coaches / aides: Supported work programs
- Help with coordinating all services

Checklist D:

Documents

- Medical reports, test results, diagnoses, location of majority of records
- Evaluations, assessments, consultations (medical, emotional, psychological, behavioral, communication)
- Treatment plans and intervention strategies
- Therapy evaluations and exercises
- Medication & Other schedules
- Historical recordkeeping of prescriptions: efficacy and side effects
- Educational assessments and IEP reports
- Child's safety plans for home, school, day programs, community, etc.
- Bills, reimbursement forms and claims
- Documentation of all costs
- Bank accounts and records / bill paying services
- Private Company Insurance Card
- State Insurance Card
- Medicare Card
- Identity Card
- Student ID Card
- Trust agreements
- Estate Planning documents
 - Will
 - Living Will
 - Power of Attorney
 - Guardianship / Conservatorship
 - Health Care Proxy
 - Letter of Intent
 - Letter of Authorization

Public and Private Agency Supports and Services:

- Case Worker and Agency
- Transition Coordinators from School and Agency
- Social Case Worker
- Day Program, Residential Home, Vocational Program Contacts / Facilitators
- Visiting Nurse, Aides, etc.
- Registration with local town police and fire departments about disabled person in residence
- Registration with local town human services department for social services
- Registration for special transportation / handicap rides

Eligibility for Public Benefits:

SSI rules about disability:

- The child must not be working and earning more than \$1,101 a month in 2012
- The child must have a physical or mental condition, or a combination of conditions, that result in “marked and severe functional limitations”.
- The child’s condition must have been disabling, or expected to be disabling, for at least 12 months; or must expected to result in death.

A review is performed at least every 3 years for children younger than age 18 whose conditions are expected to improve; or at any time even if the child’s condition is not expected to improve.

The Social Security Disability Insurance benefits program (SSDI) pays benefits to adults who have a disability that began before they were 22 years old. The SSDI is considered a “child’s benefit” because it is paid on the parent’s Social Security earnings record.

For as disabled child to become entitled to this “child” benefit, one of his or her parents:

- Must be receiving Social Security retirement or disability benefits; or
- Must have died and worked long enough under Social Security.

SSDI disabled adult “child” benefits continue as long as the individual remains disabled. Benefits may be payable also to the parent of the adult “disabled” child if he or she was disabled before age 18.