

SECTION 8

Information for Parents

Age 18

At age 18 your child is legally considered to be an adult even if he/she has a disability. In addition to the issues that this may present to any family, there are particular issues which should be addressed by parents of a child with disabilities.

GUARDIANSHIP

If your child needs your continuing support for making decisions and signing documents involving:

- Residence;
- educational, vocational or behavioral programs;
- release of clinical records and photographs; and/or
- medical and dental care;

you will need to apply to your **local Probate Court** for either Full (Plenary) or Partial Guardianship. A filing fee is usually charged. The court will arrange for assessments to be done both by a lawyer appointed to your child, and by a DMR team. A hearing will be scheduled within 45 days.

To Apply: Look in the Blue Pages of your telephone book. Under the name of the town where you live there should be a number and address for Probate Court (often at the Town Hall). Call for their hours. Keep in mind; you will need to apply in person.

ENTITLEMENTS

Because at age 18 your child is now considered to be an adult with disabilities, financial assistance may be available from these sources.

1. **U.S. Government: Supplemental Social Security (SSI)**
Social Security is now recommending that you apply in the month following your child's 18th birthday. When you call, they will schedule a date and time for a telephone interview and mail you the necessary information prior to the scheduled date. They will gather any supporting information they need and usually decide upon eligibility within 90 days.

To Apply: Call the Social Security toll-free number, 800-772-1213, or look in the Blue Pages under "United States Government; Social Security Administration."

2. **State of Connecticut: Department of Social Services.**

Because the cost of living in Connecticut is higher than in some other states, the state often supplements the Social Security payment with additional money.

Under this same program, your child may be eligible for medical insurance (Title XIX). You can apply for these programs at the same time you apply for SSI, but eligibility will depend upon your child being found eligible for SSI. Cash assistance, however, will be retroactive to the date of application, so it is beneficial to go ahead and apply at the same time you apply for SSI.

To Apply: For State Supplement and Title XIX, call DSS for an application. DSS can be found in the Blue Pages under Connecticut, State of; Social Services Department.

The forms look intimidating, but remember that you are filling in information on only your child; no parents, siblings, or anyone else in the house. On the first page of the application, be sure to check that you are applying for both cash assistance and medical coverage. Be sure to follow up with any further information they request.

VOTER REGISTRATION

To help your child apply: Forms are usually available at any state agency, town hall, post office, or library. They are easy to complete, and can be returned by mail. Some towns also post forms on their websites for printing and return by mail. Look on your town's website under voting information, or registrar of voters.