



## **Alternatives to Guardianship: Supported Decision Making for People with I/DD**

Every person in the State of Connecticut who is 18 years of age or older is considered legally capable of directing his or her personal and financial affairs.

In CT, the court will appoint a guardian only if it finds by clear and convincing evidence that the respondent has intellectual disability and is totally or partially unable to meet essential requirements for his or her physical health or safety and totally or partially unable to make informed decisions about matters relating to his or her care. The court may appoint either a plenary guardian or a limited guardian.

1. A **plenary guardian** supervises all aspects of the care of a protected person who, by reason of the severity of his or her intellectual disability, is “totally unable to meet essential requirements for his or her physical health or safety” and “totally unable to make informed decisions about matters related to his or her care.”

(2) A **limited guardian** supervises only certain specified aspects of a protected person's care because the court finds that the respondent is able to do some, but not all, of the tasks necessary to meet essential requirements for his or her physical health or safety or make some, but not all, informed decisions about matters related to his or her care.

Many parents of young adults with I/DD are not aware that there are alternatives to guardianship that give people with disabilities support to make decisions without taking away their rights. Supported decision making is one alternative that allows individuals to make their own decisions and stay in charge of their lives, while receiving any support they need to do so. All people need and use support to make important life decisions. Even if a person with a disability needs extra help to make significant life decisions, their right to make their own choices should not automatically be taken away.

With supported decision making, a person with a disability chooses someone they trust to serve as their supporter to assist them with:

- Understanding the options, responsibilities, and consequences of their decisions.
- Obtaining and understanding information relevant to their decisions.
- Communicating their decisions to the appropriate people.

The Arc of Connecticut and The Arc of the United States believe that the most people with intellectual and developmental disabilities can manage their own affairs with informal assistance. Supported decision making allows individuals to make their own decisions and stay in charge of their lives, while receiving any support they need to do so.

**For more information visit the National Resource Center for Supported Decision Making webpage at:**  
<http://www.supporteddecisionmaking.org/>