

A Guide To Supported Decision-Making

What is a Supported Decision-Making?

A series of relationships, arrangements and agreements designed to assist an individual with a disability to make decisions and communicate to others about the individual's life.

At 18 years old, all individuals, including those with intellectual and developmental disabilities, reach the legal age of majority. This means that parents can no longer make decisions legally on behalf of their children.

Where do I begin?

- **National Resource Center for Supported Decision-Making :** supporteddecisionmaking.org
- **Supported Decision-Making Teams: Setting the Wheels in Motion:** bit.ly/sdmwheelsinmotion
- **Guide -The Right to Make Choices: International Laws and Decision-Making by People with Disabilities:** bit.ly/righttomakechoices
- **Supported Decision-Making and Understanding My IEP:** bit.ly/understandingiep
 - **Sample* Supported Decision-Making Form for IEP Meeting:** bit.ly/sdmsampleform
- **Pairing Advance Directives with Supported Decision-Making:** bit.ly/pairingsdm
- **The Family Guide to Transition Services in New Jersey (pages 22-24):** bit.ly/familyguideservices
- **Prepare Your Child for Age of Majority and Transfer of Rights:** bit.ly/preparingageofmajority
- **Decision-Making Supports:** bit.ly/sdmfactsheet
- **Spanish Resources:** thearc.org/download-free-future-planning-resources-spanish

What is the process?

- Choose who the individual would like to have as a Supporter (can have more than 1)
- Decide which life decisions they may help the individual with. These may include:
 - obtaining food, clothing and a place to live
 - physical health
 - mental health
 - managing money or property
 - getting an education or other training
 - choosing and maintaining services and supports
 - finding a job
- Choose how the supporter should help. This may include:
 - Giving information in a way the individual can understand
 - Discussing the good things and bad things (pros and cons) that could happen if the individual makes one decision or another
 - Telling other people the individual's wishes
- If choosing more than 1 supporter, decide how they will act. These could be:
 - Jointly (work together to help)
 - Successively (For example: Supporter #2 helps me if Supporter #1 is not available)

Virtual Content

- **Visit:**
 - **Future Planning Webinars:** bit.ly/fiwebinars
 - **Planned Lifetime Assistance Network of New Jersey (PLAN/NJ):** bit.ly/planNJ
 - **Let's Talk About Supported Decision-Making:** <https://bit.ly/letstalksdm>
- **Watch**
 - **Stand By Me: An Overview of Supported Decision-Making and Guardianship Alternatives :** www.youtube.com/watch?v=Jgz8InOIUpE
 - **Disability Rights New Jersey - Supported Decision-Making:** disabilityrightsnj.org/resource/supported-decision-making/

Benefits of Supported Decision-Making

- It is the least restrictive option for when your child turns 18.
- Helps people with disabilities to:
 - Understand information, issues, and choices
 - Focus attention on decision-making
 - Weigh options
 - Ensure that decisions are based on their own preferences
 - Interpret and/or communicate decisions to other parties.
- Studies have shown that people with disabilities who exercise greater self-determination have a better quality of life, display more independence, and are more likely to be employed and to be involved in the community.
- Guardianship is difficult to modify or terminate.

**** Type all links exactly as seen including any capital and lowercase letters, and numbers. ****

