

# Age of Majority Fact Sheet: Did You Know?

When your child reaches 18, the age of majority, your status as natural guardian expires, without regard to your child's disabilities.

The fact that your child might not be able to handle these issues on their own does not alter these results.

As of their 18th birthday your child becomes an adult, responsible for their own decisions. They are on their own regardless of disability status.

In order to re-establish your status as legal guardian of your child, you must initiate a court proceeding.

Records custodians may not legally disclose your child's medical information to you.

There is a relatively simple process to restore the parents' protective powers: a legal action in probate court called Guardian Advocacy.

You may lack the authority to direct, or participate in, your child's medical treatment, except as a proxy during an emergency.

This process delegates several of the individual with developmental disability's rights to another person without declaring them incapacitated.

Banks and government agencies have neither the duty, nor the authority, to discuss benefits or financial issues with you.

Even when aware of this opportunity, many care providers do not address the issue, often fearing the expense or complexity of court.

Upon turning 18, your child has no one to legally speak on their behalf.

When an emergency finally occurs, emotional stress multiplies, and fears of expense and complication become reality.

\* Adapted from the Center for Guardian Advocacy website – [www.centerforguardianadvocacy.org](http://www.centerforguardianadvocacy.org)