

Turning 18 in Maryland

Your Student is Considered an Adult at Age 18

The Age of Majority simply means the legal age established under state law at which an individual is no longer a minor. As a young adult, they will have the rights and responsibilities to make certain legal choices. This is called Transfer of Rights. That means that ALL of the rights and responsibilities of adulthood transfer to the student from the parents. In Maryland, the Age of Majority is 18 with one exception: Special Educational Decision-Making Rights, which remain with the parents past age 18.

Examples of new rights and responsibilities possible at/after age 18

- ✓ Healthcare Decisions
- ✓ Residential Decisions
- ✓ Binding Contracts
- ✓ Bank Accounts/Credits/Loans
- ✓ Employment
- ✓ Voting
- ✓ Driver's License
- ✓ Getting Married

Alternatives to Guardianship

While you have likely heard of guardianship, many individuals with disabilities can make all decisions independently and others may need varying degrees of support to make their own decisions regarding health, safety, living arrangements, and finances. Some examples of these lesser restrictive options are:

- Supported Decision Making
- Living Will
- Medical and Financial Power of Attorney
- Representative Payee and Advanced Directives

Note: It is important to consider ALL less-restrictive options, such as Supported Decision Making, FIRST before beginning the guardianship process, which is a court-ordered arrangement that cannot easily be reversed.

Get ready for what's next:



Presume competence and set high expectations



Start thinking and discussing with your student how they will make decisions when they turn 18



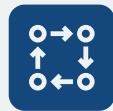
Involve your student in actively making daily life decisions



Ask the IEP team to add goals and activities to improve and practice decision-making skills



Never too early or too late to build skills around decision making



Students need to learn what their options are before they turn 18



Learning about the turning 18 process is an opportunity for growth and getting ready for adult life

