

## Alternatives to Guardianship

Guardianship is when a judge decides if a person with a disability should not make their own choices. If a judge decides you need a guardian, someone else will make choices *for* you.

Under guardianship, you can lose your rights to:

- Drive
- Choose where you live
- Choose where you work
- Vote
- Get married
- Make medical decisions
- And more.



- yes
- no
- maybe

All people need help to make important decisions. If you need extra help to make decisions, your rights should not be taken away.

### What Are Alternatives to Guardianship?

Alternatives to guardianship are other ways that people can help you make your own choices without giving you a guardian. Some alternatives include supported decision-making and special needs trusts. Please call us to learn more about how you, your family, and friends can use these options.

Our number is **1-800-252-9729**.

The Arc of Texas thinks most people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) do not need a guardian. People with IDD can be supported in many ways to make their own decisions without taking away their rights. Services or supports through Medicaid waivers like HCS or CLASS or help making money decisions are just two ways. And you can use a supported decision-making agreement.

Using a supported decision-making agreement, you choose someone you trust to help you make decisions. Your helper, or supporter, can be someone like your parents or a good friend. Your supporter can help you get and understand information so you can make a decision. They can help you tell your decision to other people. But, your supporter cannot make a decision FOR you. You can also change your mind and say you don't want this person to support you whenever you want.



If you want to try this, you would fill out a supported decision-making agreement. You would say what kind of decisions your supporter can help you make. You can share this form with people like doctors when you have an important decision to make.

With supported decision-making agreements and other alternatives to guardianship, you can get help to make your own choices. This lets you be more independent. Your parents and other people you trust don't need to be your guardian to help you make decisions.

## Protections for People with Guardians

If you already have a guardian, you still have rights! Your guardian should allow you to have as many rights as possible. Talk to your guardian and tell them you want your rights to choose where you live and work, get married, drive, vote, and make medical choices. You also have the rights listed in the orange box to the right, unless a judge takes them away.

Please call us to learn more about your rights as a person with a guardian. We can also talk to you and your guardian about alternatives to guardianship. Call us at **1-800-252-9729**.

For more information on alternatives to guardianship, please call us at **1-800-252-9729** or visit the websites below.

### **The Arc of Texas: Guardianship**

<http://www.thearcoftexas.org/guardianship>

### **The Arc US**

<http://bit.ly/1TTeK20>

### **National Resource Center for Supported Decision-Making**

<http://supporteddecisionmaking.org/>

## Bill of Rights for People with a Guardian

If you have a guardian, you have the right to:

- Live, work, and play in the most integrated setting.
- Visit with people you like.
- Get money to spend how you like each month.
- Have your guardian visit you at least once every three months.
- And more!

This publication was made possible through the Developmental Disabilities Policy Fellow grant.

Financial support for the Developmental Disabilities Policy Fellow grant is provided by the Texas Council for Developmental Disabilities, with Federal funds\* made available by the United States Department of Health and Human Services, Administration on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities.

\*\$67,500 (69%) DD Funds; \$30,865 (31%) non-federal resources