

Addressing Financial Issues

Start a file to organize and manage your new financial demands.

Keep a written record of your medical bills and payments. Look at how your family is spending money and how this may change to meet the needs of your child.

Find out about financial assistance programs that could help you.

Because of your infant's needs, Baby may qualify to receive Medicaid benefits. Ask a social worker or other professional who is working with your family to describe any programs that you could consider.

Click on

http://www.ssa.gov/SSA_Home.html

and type in "Disability Benefits for Children" in the Search box.

Along with government programs that may be available to you, there are programs sponsored by community organizations.

To help you find these programs, connect with parents who have already had the experiences you are going to have. These people can help you receive the best services you can find. They can tell you who to contact, perhaps saving you many phone calls and much time.

If you need suggestions of programs that could help you, contact the

Delaware Parent Information Center at (302) 366-0152 (TDD: 366-0178).

Review your health insurance policy.

Become familiar with what your



insurance will cover. Ask the doctors and therapists you meet to estimate the costs of the treatment and describe what will be covered by your insurance. Keep a written record of this information.

Do you have major medical (extended) coverage?

This coverage is usually attached to a basic medical insurance policy. It is insurance to financially protect against the more costly procedures and activities. Look for a major medical policy that covers:

- extended care
- testing procedures
- extensive physical therapy
- prosthetic devices

As you shop for a major medical policy, consider these features:

- What does the policy cost each month?

- What are the amounts of the deductibles that you would be responsible for paying?
- Is there a limit or cap on how much will be paid for some services or treatments?
- Are all family members covered, and to what extent?
- Is a child covered after the age of 21?
- Is there emergency coverage or a payment procedure if the policyholder is injured and is not able to pay the premium?
- Is there an opportunity to change the policy?
- Can the policy be transferred if you move or leave your job?

Keep a written record of the medical and dependent care expenses you have for your baby with special needs.

If you keep accurate records, some of these expenses may be deductible on your income tax return. Check with the Internal Revenue Service to find out what the current allowable deductions are.

Review your estate plans.

If your child is going to need care after your death, you may want to start to financially prepare now. This can be accomplished several different ways.

A “supplemental needs trust” may meet the long-term needs of your child.

The trust is set up to pay for items not covered by public funds. These items would include clothing, hobbies, and other comforts.

The trust should be carefully worded so that the fund supplements and does not replace government assistance. Look for a lawyer who specializes in trusts or estate planning to help you establish a trust.

Another resource is your life insurance policy.

Review what benefits will be paid at your death. Are they enough to cover the costs of a dependent child?



Who would make decisions about the care of your baby if you could not?

Something could happen to you so that you are not able to make decisions about what will happen to your child. By naming someone to have a “durable power of attorney,” they would be able to make decisions for you if you could not do it for yourself.

The person with the “durable power of attorney” would have the responsibility for determining who would have custody of the child and how the child is to be cared for. If you have not provided for someone to make these decisions, the state will

appoint a guardian to make these decisions.

There are many things to consider.

The choices could be overwhelming. Map out the decisions you need to make. Break them down into "bite-sized" steps. Do your best to keep nibbling away at the tasks needed to

be done. Over time you will make real progress. It feels good to be "in control" of your finances. Best wishes as you move forward.

Find us on the web at

<http://ag.udel.edu/extension/fam/>

Updated with the assistance of La'Shawn Waters, student in the Department of Individual and Family Studies, University of Delaware. Some of this material is adapted from *The High-Risk Child: A Guide for Concerned Parents*, by Philip R. Deppe and Judith Sherman with Sydelle Engel. NY: MacMillan Publishing Co., Inc. This issue was initially prepared by Debbie Amsden for Cooperative Extension, University of Delaware. For more information, contact Pat Nelson, 105 Edward R. Wilson House, University of Delaware, Newark, DE 19717-1303.

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