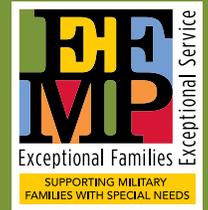


Special-Needs Trusts for Long-Term Financial Planning



Families with a child with special needs have unique financial needs. Financial counseling is available to help families address various issues regarding income, debt reduction, medical expenses, insurance, government assistance and long-term financial planning through the installation's Personal Financial Management Program.

Establishing a special-needs trust for a child with special needs is critical. The trust provides for the child without jeopardizing access to current or future state or federal benefits. It is important to establish the special-needs trust before the child reaches the age of majority — usually the age of 18, though this varies by state.

Establishing a special-needs trust

Consult an attorney experienced in establishing special-needs trusts and disability-related laws. An improperly worded or vague trust could result in the loss of eligibility for programs such as Supplemental Security Income or Medicaid.

The trust can be funded with life insurance policies or inheritances from other family members or friends. Consult an attorney to learn the proper language for any bequests, as money, valuables or real estate must be left to the trust — not the individual with special needs — to avoid exceeding income caps for various governmental services.

Additional assistance

Long-term financial care for a family member with special needs is a complex issue varying greatly by location. Your installation's Exceptional Family Member Program office and Office of the Judge Advocate General can provide advice and referrals to local attorneys who specialize in special-needs laws.



<http://www.militaryonesource.mil/family-and-relationships/special-needs>

Exceptional Family Member Program support is available for military families with special needs.

For more information, please contact your installation EFMP office or visit

<http://www.militaryonesource.mil/family-and-relationships/special-needs>, an official Department of Defense website.