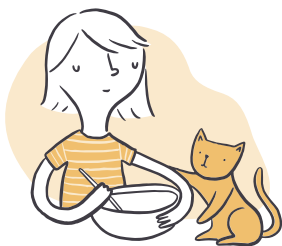




The Role & Responsibilities of Being Someone's Guardian

What is a Guardian?

A Guardian has the legally granted authority (and responsibility) to provide the care, maintenance and education of a dependent. Guardians offer all support during their time as Guardian, including shelter, food, clothing and any other needs. They have the authority to make healthcare decisions and authorize medical, dental, psychiatric and psychological care for a minor. Some experimental treatments, however, may require the court to grant approval.



Guardianship is an important concept in estate planning. There's no greater honor than being asked to oversee the well-being of children or others who are vulnerable and cannot care for themselves. But with that honor comes great responsibility. If you've recently been appointed Guardian for a friend or family member's children, it's important that you understand everything that's required for you to competently fulfill the role.

What Your Basic Responsibilities Are:

- Make all decisions and act in the best interest of the minor
- Provide all basic care — food, shelter, clothing, education, maintenance, support, etc.
- Be responsible for physical and mental health; authorize healthcare treatments and make decisions
- Provide housing (or appropriate living arrangements)
- Ensure a proper education
- Ensure access to health care
- Apply for public assistance benefits if necessary (including food benefits and health insurance)
- Potentially file lawsuits on behalf of minor

What You Typically Can Expect:

- To be granted custody of the minor
- Receive and manage money to use for the care and support of the minor
- To act in the best financial interest of the minor
- Remain conscientious of how money is being spent; keep explicit records of all spending
- File a yearly report with the court

What You Typically Can't Do:

- Generally without court authority, you cannot:
 - Move out of state
 - Place the minor in a residential care facility
 - Authorize experimental medical or psychological treatments of any kind
 - Spend or invest money not in the best interest of the minor
 - Sell any real property or items without authority
 - Make any changes to the Estate Plan
 - Terminate guardianship before the minor is a legal adult, unless the court has intervened