

SECTION 5: GUARDIANSHIP, ALTERNATIVES TO GUARDIANSHIP AND ‘KEEPERS OF THE DREAM’

This final section of the Letter of Intent invites caregivers to take stock of their current situation and make plans for how your dreams, and those of your family member, will be heard and honored when you are not able to be fully engaged.

As caregivers, you can take steps now and make your intentions and hopes clear for the future. This section of the Letter of Intent, along with the conversation and information during the Future is Now (FIN) series, can help you get organized.

Because decisions around guardianship can have lasting impact, this section outlines how to learn more about guardianship and alternatives.

Guardianship and Alternatives

In the past, families were routinely advised to seek guardianship for their family member with a disability. Today, families have a range of options and alternatives to guardianship. It’s important for families to understand the pros and cons of guardianship as well as the alternatives, so that each person with a disability can be supported in the way that best matches their personal circumstances.

In early 2018, the Ohio Developmental Disabilities Council published an updated booklet entitled “Guardianship in Ohio”. Download the booklet via this link: <http://ddc.ohio.gov/Portals/0/guardianship2017.pdf> . Reviewing this publication is a good way to begin to learn more about the options.

Several local organizations, including the county boards, family groups, and the University Center of Excellence on Developmental Disabilities (UCEDD) host information sessions on guardianship and alternatives. Families who have participated in Future is Now sessions will receive email updates about these sessions. These sessions are a good way to learn more – they can be especially helpful if you take members of your extended family and social network with you to these sessions so that you can learn together and talk over what you heard.

Keepers of the Dreams

Look back at the “Hope and Dreams for a Good Life” that you created in Section One. The “Keeper of the Dream” is the person – or group of people – who keep these hopes and dreams alive when you are no longer able to do so. They do what they can to work with your Service and Support Administrator (SSA) to carry out the plans that you’ve outlined in your letter of intent.

If, for instance, your family situation shifts suddenly and meets emergency status, your family member might be able to receive additional supports like a waiver. If the person already has the basic “Level One” waiver, in the event of an emergency, they may be able to receive more waiver services. The Keepers of the Dream can look back at your Letter of Intent and remember the conversations they’ve had with your family, and work with the SSA to make sure that any additional services align with your hopes and dreams.

It’s important to remember that the “keepers of the dream” are not necessarily the person/s that provides day-to-day care for your family member. The Keeper of the Dream looks out for, advocates, and takes your family member’s life seriously. They guard against the ‘things we don’t want’.



1. Look back on Section One at the “Hopes and Worries” worksheet. Take time to add to it if you’ve had new ideas about hopes or worries.
2. Take some time to reflect on who might be the keeper of your family member’s dream.
3. Review your hopes and plans for building your family member’s network of friends and allies. Is there someone – or a group of people -- you can ask to be the keepers of the dream? Remember that building a network takes time, and if your family member’s networks is small now, and there’s no one to ask, then you can start now to intentionally build up your family member’s network. There are resources in the Greater Cincinnati area, such as Good Life Network goodlifecincy.org that help families build networks.
4. Identify someone (or some people) that you’d like to share your Letter of Intent. Talk with them about what they might do to help ‘keep the dream’ and avoid the things you don’t want for your family member.
5. Share your Letter of Intent and the name/s of the Keeper of the Dream with your SSA and your attorney if you have one.

Use the space below to name the first steps you can take now so that in five years, you are able to identify ‘the keeper of the dream’.

Our Next Steps to identify and name Keepers of the Dream



Where Do We Go From Here?

- ✓ **COMPLETE THE LETTER OF INTENT:** Continue to work on your Letter of Intent. Complete the sections that are most relevant for your situation. Share it with your family and friends. Share it with your Service and Support Administrator (SSA) and attorney if you have one.

- ✓ **INVEST IN DEVELOPING A PERSONAL NETWORK:** Continue to build up a network of people who know and care for your family member. Get help doing this by attending Good Life Network events. Good Life Networks hosts regular family gatherings so that you can meet and learn from other families who are building networks. Go to the web site and sign up to get their email alerts about events and gatherings. See the Good Life Network brochure and/or check the web site goodlifecincy.org

- ✓ **ENCOURAGE CONNECTIONS:** Help your family member get more engaged with his/her community by joining Neighbors in Action. For more information contact Ann Myres or Dawn Freudenberg ann.myres@hamiltondds.org or dawn.freudenberg@hamiltondds.org

- ✓ **TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF:** Join an existing Caregiver Resource Group hosted by Caregiver Assistance Network (CAN - See flyer) or contact the Council on Aging of SW Ohio to learn about resources that can support you to stay in your home and live safely and well www.help4seniors.org

- ✓ **STAY CONNECTED:** Attend a re-union of Future Is Now families. Over time, we'll build up a network of families who can learn from and support one another.

- ✓ **LOOK FOR UPDATES:** We will send email updates about upcoming opportunities to learn more about the topics outlined in this Letter of Intent. You can also check the Hamilton County DD Services web site for events of interest to families.