

HAPPYDOWNS

*HOW TO*  
*SUPPORT*  
*YOUR LOVED ONE*



**GUARDIANSHIP | CONSERVATORSHIP | ADULT ADOPTION  
| POWER OF ATTORNEY | SUPPORTED DECISION MAKING**



# HOW TO SUPPORT YOUR LOVED ONE:

**Guardianship | Conservatorship |  
Adult Adoption | Power of Attorney  
| Supported Decision Making**

**HappyDowns | Help for Family Caregivers**



# **How To Support Your Loved One: Guardianship | Conservatorship | Adult Adoption | Power of Attorney | Supported Decision Making**

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# INTRODUCTION

As our loved ones move from being teenagers to adults, we start questioning the level of support that they need and what role we, as Family Caregivers, should play in this support.

Are there decisions that our loved ones can make for themselves, or will they be dependent on us to make all their life decisions? Are there other persons in their lives that they can depend on to help them make decisions?

Over the years a number of options have emerged for us Family Caregivers to employ, depending on the particular needs of our loved ones. In this eBook, we will explore the following options:

- Guardianship/Conservatorship,
- Adult Adoption,
- Durable Power of Attorney, and
- Supported Decision Making.

We at HappyDowns sincerely hope that the information in this eBook will help your family start the process of planning for the future of your teenager or adult who has Down Syndrome, in terms of the support that they need.



Hugs,  
The HappyDowns Team

HappyDowns | Help for Family Caregivers



# **CHAPTER ONE: LEGAL GUARDIANSHIP FOR ADULTS WITH DISABILITIES**

As the family caregiver of an adult or teenager who has Down Syndrome (DS), you are fully aware that your loved one needs help in some areas of life, e.g., making financial or medical decisions. You are also aware that they do not need help in other areas, e.g., cooking meals, personal hygiene or cleaning the home.

When they hit that “18th birthday” mark, the law considers them adults and what should we as caregivers do then, to help them in the areas that they do need assistance in? What is legal guardianship and is it the answer?

Legal guardianship for adults with disabilities is an option we hear often, whether via the school system, healthcare professionals or even some of our family members. But, what does this really mean for us and our loved one who has Down Syndrome? What impact will legal guardianship have on our loved ones and on us?

### What Is Legal Guardianship?

This is where we go to court and request a judge to give us the authority to make some or all decisions on behalf of our loved one who has Down Syndrome, on the premise that our loved one **cannot** make these decisions for themselves. Therefore, the law is essentially revoking the rights of one of its citizens (our loved one who has DS) and therefore **this decision has to be taken seriously**.

There are different types of guardianship:

- **Guardianship of the Person** – this limits the guardian to making decisions relating to personal care, e.g., medical treatment decisions, deciding where the person lives, making daily decisions about how your loved one accesses food, clothing, recreational activities, etc.



Whilst the guardian does not have to live with the person under their care, they must ensure that the person with DS is receiving proper care in areas such as, but not limited to, medical, educational, employment and end-of-life decisions.

- **Guardianship of the Estate** – this limits the guardian to making decisions relating to the estate of the person with DS. Depending on where you live, **this is known as a Conservatorship** and the person responsible for making these decisions is called a Conservator instead of a Guardian. The Conservator should use the **income of the person with DS (not their own)** to pay their bills and apply for government assistance like Medicaid or Medicare (in the United States). The Conservator will also handle insurance issues, hold the power to approve/disapprove financial contracts, etc.
- **Full Guardianship** – this gives the guardian powers to make decisions relating to every aspect of the Person and Estate. This guardian is called a Plenary Guardian.
- **Partial/Limited Guardianship** – the person with DS is determined by the court to retain some capacity for rational decision-making and thus, is not declared incompetent. The guardian therefore has been granted only some powers, e.g., medical decisions powers, whilst the person with DS can make decisions in every other area of their life.

Oftentimes we assume that because someone has been diagnosed with a disability that they automatically need guardianship. **This is not true.** Every family's case is different and thus, we must approach our situation from an individualistic view, not a broad-brush approach.

If your loved one has the capacity to execute powers of attorney, i.e., they can choose you or someone else (who is trustworthy) to make certain decisions for them, e.g., medical decisions, then guardianship/conservatorship is not necessary.

Also, please bear in mind that by the court granting guardianship/conservatorship, your loved one is deemed incapacitated and persons who are deemed incapacitated are not allowed to do certain things (depending on where you live), e.g., vote, enter into contracts, sign a lease, make significant purchases like a house, make a will or living trust or get a loan or mortgage.

### **Responsibilities of a Guardian**

Responsibility will vary based on the type of guardianship granted. Also, please ensure that you get the full details of your own case to completely understand your full responsibilities.

Nevertheless, typical responsibilities may include, but are not limited to:

- **advocating for the person's legal rights and independence,**
- **making medical care decisions and arranging for needed treatment,**
- **applying for health insurance and other needed benefits for the person with DS,**
- **providing basic everyday needs and safety,**
- **providing for the social, recreational, educational and future needs of the person with DS,**
- **ensuring the person with DS has a living situation that is safe and is the least restrictive option.**

The responsibility of a guardian ends when:



- the person with DS dies,
- the guardian dies (but someone else will have to be appointed by the court. It is good to have someone has Co-Guardian in cases like this),
- the guardian is unable to perform their duties,
- the guardian petitions the court to remove them as guardian (in this case the court often appoints the person whom the caregiver identified as "Successor Guardian". N.B. A Co-Guardian would have been useful in this situation as well).

### Who Can be a Guardian?

Anyone who is:

- at least 18 years old
- is not of unsound mind
- not diagnosed with a disability
- is not a convicted felon. This depends on the crime, e.g., if they were convicted of harming or threatening persons with a disability or an elderly person, including sexual offenses, they cannot be guardians.

Entities may also act as guardians, e.g., corporations qualified to execute trusts may be guardians of the estate. Also, any not-for-profit corporation that the court deems fit to provide the care and support for the person can be a guardian.

Please bear in mind that other things may disqualify you from being a guardian. For example, in the United States of America, parents who have access to receive a Medicaid stipend to be their child's paid caregiver, will not be able to be their legal guardian as well.

Therefore, it is important, whenever you are deciding on any agreement/status relating to your loved one, to know how it will affect other agreements.

### **The Cost of Guardianship**

Legal fees will vary widely, depending on your location and other factors such as:

- **the number of hearings your lawyer has to attend,**
- **the amount of investigation and documentation the court requires,**
- **if there is any dispute within the family that causes delays, etc.**

Some of the legal fees that may apply include:

- **Attorney fees**
- **Service fees (e.g., for the serving of papers)**
- **Court fees**
- **Expert fees (medical, psychiatric, vocational, disability experts).**

If the person with DS has an estate, then the court may dictate that the legal fees be paid from this estate. If the person with DS does not have an estate, then the cost usually falls on the family caregiver. Bear in mind that the court may have a policy as to how the fees are paid, so ensure that you find out what these policies are, so that you are not caught off guard by any expenses.

Also, check to see if there are any legal aid organizations in your area or any local/national Disability Foundations that can assist you with the fees.

Lastly, the guardian may be allowed to charge a fee for their services – find out if this applies to you based on where you are located.



## Is Guardianship the Right Choice?

This solely depends on the reality of your family's situation. We advise that you bear in mind how guardianship/conservatorship affects the rights of your loved one with DS to act on their behalf and thus, try your best to honor your loved one's pride and dignity by using the least restrictive means possible.

Choosing the right level of support that your loved one's needs is no easy feat. So, [start having these conversations](#) with your family (including your loved one) as early as possible, seek professional advice, understand the laws of your country/state and do what is best for your family.

# CHAPTER TWO: ADULT ADOPTION



Normally when you think of adoption, you think of **children** being adopted. Adoption is the legal transfer of parental rights and responsibilities from the birth parent(s) to the person(s) seeking to adopt. So, it may come as a surprise to you that adults can also be adopted.

I know, you're probably looking at the screen side-eyed right now, whilst you experience high levels of doubt. Adult Adoption? What is adult adoption? What does that even mean?

Well, it means exactly what you think it means...an adult adopting another adult. I know...there are several questions floating around in your mind now, you may have even loudly verbalized one or two of them. For example:

- **W-H-Y?**
- **Who are these adults who are doing this?**
- **Is this even necessary? Can't they just go the route of Guardianship?**

Well, as Family Caregivers, the level of support that our loved ones need is important to us. We want to know that we are making the best choices, making use of every opportunity and giving them the right level of support that allows them to live as independently as possible, whilst keeping them safe. So, let's look into this thing call Adult Adoption and see if it is the right choice for our family.

### **Can You Legally Adopt An Adult?**

That depends on where you live. It is legal to adopt an adult in the USA, Germany and Japan, but not in the UK. So, you will have to find out if the laws of your country allow this type of adoption.

Whilst you investigate, make sure to determine if there is a special window of opportunity to adopt. This refers to an age range, outside of which, you are not allowed to adopt an adult.

E.g., In Arizona (USA), this age range is between 18 and 21; thus, you cannot adopt an adult who is 22 years old and older.

### Why Do Adults Adopt Each Other?

Well, for us Family Caregivers, we would be interested in adopting our loved one who has Down Syndrome (DS). Usually, the relatives that fall into this category as the person who wants to do the adopting include:

- **Step-parent,**
- **Aunt,**
- **Uncle,**
- **Cousin or**
- **Grandparent** of the person who has DS.

These caregivers may choose the route of adoption because:

- **Presently, they have taken on the responsibility of caring for their loved one who has DS, as the parents are currently unable to do so.**
- **They plan to take on the responsibility of caring for their loved one in the future, as the parents are presently not coping and have sought their assistance.**
- **They are a step-parent to their loved one who has DS and they want to make the relationship formal in the eyes of the law.**
- **They may be a Godparent, family friend or neighbor who had to step in due to the parent passing away or becoming incapacitated.**

### The Benefits of Adult Adoption

Adult Adoption can help a person with Down Syndrome get the care they need. For example, someone who adopts an adult with Down Syndrome may add them to their health insurance coverage, make important decisions on their behalf, and



ensure that they're covered financially through inheritance (after the adoptive parent passes away).

Other benefits include:

### **1. The Parent/Child Relationship is Formally Recognized**

Who doesn't want to be on the right side of the law? Adoption causes the law to formally recognize you as the legal parent. With this parental responsibility, you get to make decisions about the care (medical, financial, social, etc.) of your loved one.

### **2. Ties with the Birth Parents are Severed**

Unfortunately, there are cases where the birth parents of the person with Down Syndrome has been abusive in the past or has not acted in the best interest of their child. By legally adopting the adult who has DS, the birth parents cannot invoke their legal 'parental responsibility' and thus they cannot choose what care the person with DS does or does not receive. They also cannot keep you and the person with DS apart.

**Please note that in the case where the adopting parent is a step-parent of the adoptee, the spouse of the step-parent (who would be a biological parent of the adoptee) retains his/her parental rights and responsibilities.**

### **3. Being Entitled to Inherit**

By adopting your loved one who has Down Syndrome, they are automatically entitled to inherit from you, regardless of if you had made a will or not. Let's face it, many of us do not make the time to create a will and oftentimes we may pass away suddenly. If we die without a will, an unadopted adult is not entitled to any inheritance from us, which can lead to them struggling financially once we die.

Another thing worth noting is that once adopted, the adult with Down Syndrome will no longer be able to automatically inherit from their biological parents unless the biological parents choose to give an inheritance via a legal will.

Also, please note that with Guardianship, the adult with Down Syndrome does not automatically inherit from their guardian. The guardian would have to employ a legal will to pass on any inheritance.

### **Is Adult Adoption Right for Your Family?**

Adoptions are permanent, therefore if your intention is not to have a parent-child relationship that lasts forever, then this may not be the route for your family to take. This is a lifelong commitment where you are creating a forever family, thus serious consideration needs to happen and all parties involved should be fully on board.

# CHAPTER THREE: DURABLE POWER OF ATTORNEY



A Power of Attorney (POA) is a legal document that is voluntarily signed by your loved one who has Down Syndrome (making them the "principal") that gives you the power to make some or all decisions for them (this makes you the "agent" or "attorney in fact").

Sounds good, right? You and your loved one working together to make the best decisions for their life. **Please note that your loved one has to understand what it means to sign a contract to be able to use a POA.** Therefore, the Attorney preparing the POA will have to interview your loved one and take copious notes. Also, a professional may be called in to assess the capacity of your loved one to make their own decisions.

Ok, so what is a Durable Power of Attorney (DPOA) and how is it different from a Power of Attorney? Well, in most places the POA terminates when your loved one becomes incapacitated and can no longer make decisions for themselves, but if the POA was made "durable", then it was designated to last for the lifetime of your loved one, **unless your loved one cancels it.** Thus, you can see the benefit to attaining a DPOA, as opposed to a POA.

### **Benefits of a Durable Power of Attorney**

**1.You do not have to go to court for the document to be legal. Instead, this legal document can be signed before a notary public or witnesses or both.**

**2.Your loved one with DS gets to chose who they want to make decisions for them, instead of someone else making that choice for them.**

**3.Your loved one can change their mind and cancel the DPOA at any time**

**4.Your loved one is not giving away their right to make decisions when they can and when they**

want to, instead they are appointing someone to be available to make decisions when they can't and when they don't want to make these decisions (e.g. medical, educational or financial).

### How Long does a Durable Power of Attorney Lasts?

Depending on where you live, the DPOA will last:

- 1.Until your loved one with DS cancels it;
- 2.For the lifetime of your loved one;
- 3.Until your authority has been terminated by the courts and the power of attorney does not provide for a replacement; or
- 4.A guardian is appointed for your loved one with DS.

### Types of Durable Power of Attorney

DPOAs can be **limited** or **general**, but in either case the responsibilities of the agent must be spelled out. Your loved one cannot just state "*I declare such person to make all decisions for my life. The End.*".

As you may have guessed, a limited DPOA will give you the authority to make decisions limited to certain events or certain life areas such as healthcare, education or finances.

A general DPOA will give you authority to make decisions for your loved one in all areas, **as allowed by your local and national laws**. This may include giving you the authority to handle bank accounts for your loved one, manage assets, sign checks, sell property, file taxes, etc.

## Educational Power of Attorney

Yes, you read that right. You do not have to be your loved one's Guardian to make educational decisions for them once they become an adult. Thus, the school does not have to kick you out of your loved one's meetings, citing you no longer have the authority to make decisions for them. An Educational Power of Attorney will reopen the doors to those meetings for you.

## Durable Power of Attorney for Healthcare

Sometimes called a **Healthcare Power of Attorney (HCPA)** or a **Healthcare Proxy**, this allows you to make health related decisions for your loved one who has Down Syndrome. Depending on where you live, in addition to "agent" and "attorney-in-fact", you may be called a **"health care proxy"** or a **"health care surrogate"**.

As the health care proxy, **you are legally required to follow your loved one's wishes** to the extent that you are aware of them. You are expected to work with doctors and other healthcare providers to ensure that your loved one gets the medical care that they want.

To make things easier, it is recommended that your loved one creates what is called a "health care declaration" or "living will" to provide written instructions about their wishes in terms of medical care. Depending on where you live, you may see that the DPOA for healthcare and the "living will" are combined on a single form called an "Advance Health Care Directive".

## Durable Power of Attorney for Finances

This allows you to handle financial transactions on the behalf of your loved one who has Down Syndrome. This can include all or some of the following:

- **operating your loved one's small business,**



- **using your loved one's assets to pay for their everyday expenses,**
- **filing and paying your loved one's taxes,**
- **buying, selling, maintaining, paying taxes on, and mortgaging your loved one's real estate and other property,**
- **buying and selling insurance policies and annuities for your loved one,**
- **handling transactions with banks and other financial institutions for your loved one,**
- **investing your loved one's money in stocks, bonds, and mutual funds,**
- **claiming property your loved one inherits or is otherwise entitled to,**
- **collecting government benefits for your loved one,**
- **transferring property to a trust for your loved one, and**
- **hiring someone to represent your loved one in court.**

Please note that you are required to:

- **keep your property separate from your loved one's,**
- **maintain accurate records,**
- **act in the best interest of your loved one,**
- **and avoid conflicts of interest.**

## When Choosing Durable Power of Attorney

### Consider the following:

- Speak with your loved one and ensure that they have the capacity to use a DPOA.
- Have separate documents for financial and medical DPOAs. Oftentimes you have to present the DPOA to different institutions and professionals to prove that you have the authority to act on behalf of your loved one. Thus, the persons dealing with the finances of your loved one do not need to see and know your loved one's medical information. Similarly, the professionals dealing with your loved one's health care do not need to know your loved one's financial information.
- If possible, have one family member/friend be the agent dealing with the finances and another family member/friend deal with the healthcare decisions. It can be a lot for one person to be in charge of making both medical and financial decisions, thus if you have the support from family and friends, spread the responsibilities across so that one person does not become overwhelmed.
- Ensure that the DPOA is prepared by an experienced Attorney and it is as customized as possible to fit your unique family situation. Remember that laws differ by location, therefore you want to ensure that you are making the best use of the rights available to you and your loved one according to the laws of the land.
- Ensure that your family's [Future Planning Team](#) is kept informed on all matters relating to the DPOA. If everyone is kept informed, then no one will feel left out, or as if information is being deliberately withheld from them. This reduces the chance of strife within the family.

# CHAPTER FOUR: SUPPORTED DECISION MAKING



For many years, Guardianship was the "go-to" for a lot of Family Caregivers, as it was believed that adults with Down Syndrome could not make decisions on their own. Over the years, though, families started realising that their loved ones **do** have the capacity to make some decisions on their own and thus, a lot of effort has been made to honour that and not have the rights of their loved ones removed.

So, instead of making a bee line to Guardianship, many caregivers are searching for alternative ways of supporting their loved ones. Some of the options currently identified and employed by Family Caregivers include Adult Adoption, Durable Power of Attorney and Supported Decision Making.

### What Is Supported Decision Making?

Supported Decision Making (SDM) is a process by which an individual with Down Syndrome (DS) chooses various persons to assist them to make decisions. For example, an adult with DS can choose their father to help them with medical decisions and choose a trusted family friend, who has a background in finances, to help them make financial decisions. In SDM, the person with DS is the **Decision Maker** and the person chosen to assist is the **Supporter**.

We all need help to make certain decisions in our lives, so why would persons with Down Syndrome be any different? Supported Decision Making emphasizes the right of the person with Down Syndrome to actively determine what their life looks like.

### The Role of the Decision Maker

The person with Down Syndrome is responsible for:

- **choosing their Supporters.**
- **deciding what areas they need help in. For example, education, healthcare, finances, relationships, where to live, etc.**

- **deciding what kind of help they need. For example, they could need help to do research and gathering information relating to a particular decision that needs to be made; or they could need help to understand information already presented to them.**

### **The Role of the Supporter**

A Supporter can be anyone... a family member, service provider, friend, neighbor, co-worker, etc...**as long as the Supporter agrees to serve in this role.**

The job of the Supporter is to assist the person with Down Syndrome to **make their own choice**, not the Supporter's choice.

The Supporter is responsible for:

- **communicating to the person with DS in such a way that the person clearly understands the information presented,**
- **presenting all options to the person with DS,**
- **outlining the pros and cons of all options presented,**
- **allowing the person with DS to make their own decision without coercion.**

Chances are the person with DS will ask the Supporter for their opinion and maybe flat out ask them what they would do in that particular situation.

As a Supporter, **it is fine to give your opinion if asked**, however, you should emphasize to the Decision Maker that the choice is theirs to make and not yours.

## Tips for Supporters:

- **Be patient when listening to the Decision Maker.**
- **Presume competence when listening to the Decision Maker.**
- **Do what you can to facilitate communication between you and the Decision Maker. Sometimes this may mean using visuals, sign language, assistive technology, etc. to communicate.**
- **Distinguish when you are guessing what the person with DS is communicating vs. when you are clear as to what their desires are. Sometimes, the Decision Maker may not be clear in their communication or be non-communicative (this can be attributed to various things: the environment they are presently in, they may not be feeling well or up to fielding questions at the time, it may just not be a good time).**
- **Remember that your efforts are appreciated and your best is good enough.**

## Benefits of Supported Decision Making

Supported Decision Making is all about self-determination (the process by which a person controls their own life). It is built on the belief that persons with Down Syndrome should be given the opportunity to decide (as much as is possible) what is important to them, and with the help of the persons around them, set goals and work to achieve these goals to ensure that they live a fulfilling life.

Supported Decision Making supports the idea that decision-making is a skill that can be learned by persons with Down Syndrome and by making decisions for themselves, persons with DS will learn to manage and avoid risks.



This in turn fosters independent living, advancements in employment, financial independence and possibly most important, self-advocacy.

### Making It Work

In an effort to make SDM work, the following are recommended:

- **Supporters should not assume that the person cannot make a decision now due to the fact that they failed to make the same decision in the past.**
- **Focus on what a person can do, not what they can't. Making bad choices does not disqualify an individual from making decisions all together (we would all be disqualified). If needs be, contact disability agencies/foundations and see if they can assist with skill building or technical assistance to help the individual with Down Syndrome learn decision-making skills.**
- **Explore the use of assistive technology. E.g., Apps to remind them to take their medication or perform hygiene tasks or manage their money.**
- **Supporters should not assume that decisions never change. The Decision Maker will make a particular decision at that particular time under those particular circumstances. Circumstances and people change, thus decisions will change too.**
- **Supporters should always prepare the Decision Maker before attending particular appointments. E.g., If you are visiting the doctor about a particular issue, you can go through the information that you have so far about the issue and discuss possible questions to ask or concerns the individual with DS may have.**

- **Supporters should ensure that the person with DS is present at all meetings and that they do not talk over them.**
- **Have a Supported Decision Making Agreement (SDMA). Make it formal. The following (3 images) is an example taken from "supported decisions.org":**

Supported Decision-Making Agreement  
developed by Center for Public Representation

This is the Supported Decision-Making Agreement of

Name : \_\_\_\_\_ Date of birth: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

A. I need supporter(s) to help me make decisions about:

☐ Taking care of my financial affairs, like banking

☐ Hiring a lawyer if I need one and working with the lawyer

☐ My health care, including large and small health care decisions

☐ Personal care (like where I live, the support services I need, managing the people who work with me, my diet, exercise, education, safety and activities)

☐ Other matters: \_\_\_\_\_

B. I expect my supporter(s) to help me in the following ways:

☐ Giving me information in a way I can understand

☐ Discussing the good things and bad things (pros and cons) that could happen if I make one decision or another

☐ Telling other people my wishes

☐ \_\_\_\_\_

C. I express myself and show what I want in the following ways:

☐ Telling people my likes and dislikes.

☐ Telling people what I do and do not want to do.

☐ \_\_\_\_\_

☐ \_\_\_\_\_

D. I designate the following individual(s) to be part of my Supported Decision-Making Network to assist me in making decisions.

Network Supporter #1

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date of birth: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Relationship: \_\_\_\_\_

Areas of Assistance for Supporter #1: Check all that apply.

☐ Finances ☐ Healthcare ☐ Living Arrangements

☐ Relationships/Social ☐ Employment ☐ Legal Matters

☐ Other (please specify):

Areas I don't want Supporter #1 to assist me with:

E. If I have more than one Supporter (Optional, but if you do not fill out this section, your Supporters will act "Successively".)

My Supporters will act (choose one)

☐ Jointly (work together to help me)

OR

☐ Successively (For example: Supporter #2 helps me if Supporter #1 is not available)

F. I understand that at any time I can choose to end this agreement. I understand that at any time I can choose to add, replace or remove a network supporter.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

G. Notary Certification

Commonwealth of Massachusetts, County of \_\_\_\_\_

On this \_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_\_\_, before me, the undersigned notary public, personally appeared \_\_\_\_\_ proved to me through satisfactory evidence of identification, which were \_\_\_\_\_, to be the person whose name is signed on the preceding or attached document in my presence.

(seal)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Notary Public Signature

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This agreement will clearly indicate who is a Supporter and what area each Supporter can or cannot advise the Decision Maker in.

This document quickly and clearly shows professionals, e.g. doctors, that the individual with DS is using SDM.



# CONCLUSION

Determining the best support level for your loved one is extremely important. It is also important to note that you cannot do it all by yourself...you need help...so involve as many trusted persons as you have around you and continuously seek assistance from all national and international organizations that offer help to family caregivers and persons with disabilities.

Determining the appropriate level of support for your loved one really boils down to the needs of your loved one and the particular situation that your family is in. With that being said, regular conversations should be had with:

- **your loved one,**
- **family,**
- **friends,**
- **relevant government institutions,**
- **disability foundations, and**
- **any other allies**

to ensure that, as a Team, you properly assess the needs of your loved one and then employ the best strategy to empower you and your loved one to **live your best lives.**

We sincerely hope that the information in this eBook has informed and empowered you to take one step towards planning for the future.

**We wish you and your family all the best!**

**Visit HAPPYDOWNS for more information, tips and FREE resources to help you and your loved one who has Down Syndrome.**

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