




SPECIAL NEEDS CHILDREN & FAMILY LAW: WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

Sarah E. Kay, Esq., BCS
Kay Family Law PLLC
Kayfamilylaw.com
sarah@kayfamilylaw.com
Tampa, FL

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Philip J. Schipani, Esq., BCS
Schipani Norman & McLain PA
manasotalawyer.com
Phil@manasotalawyer.com
Sarasota, FL

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THANK YOU

- **Natalie Baird-King, Esq., BCS (Tampa)**
Natalie Baird Mediations
King Kay Solutions LLC
- **Alison Allman, Esq. (Tampa)**
Special Education Law & Advocacy
- **Andrea Macintire, Ed.S. (St. Petersburg)**
Special Education Law & Advocacy



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AGENDA

1. Special Education Considerations
2. Financial Considerations
3. Special Needs Children & Child Support Considerations
4. Parenting Plan Best Practices



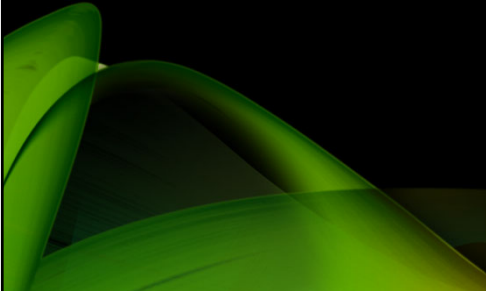
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but
first.

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DEFINITIONS
USED IN THIS
PRESENTATION

“Special Needs Child” – A child who has been determined by a qualified expert to require assistance beyond what is required by similarly situated children in education, medical attention, emotional health, or behavior.

However, there are different definitions for different purposes or institutions such as:

- Educational/School
- Medical
- Insurance
- Legal
- Disability
- Gifted



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SPECIAL NEEDS FAMILY

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FIRST: REMEMBER THEY ARE CHILDREN

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LIKE ALL OTHER
CHILDREN, THEY
HAVE THINGS
THEY LOVE

(AND DON'T
LOVE)



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THEY
HAVE
FAVORITE
ACTIVITIES



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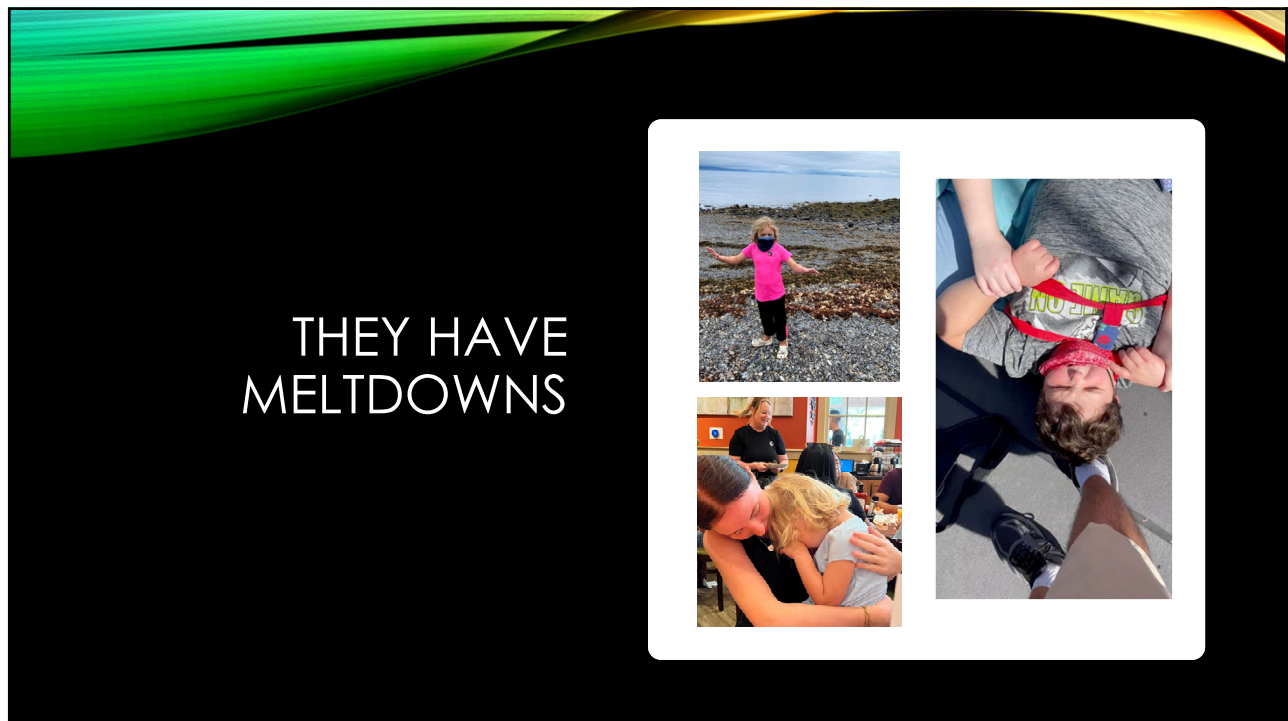
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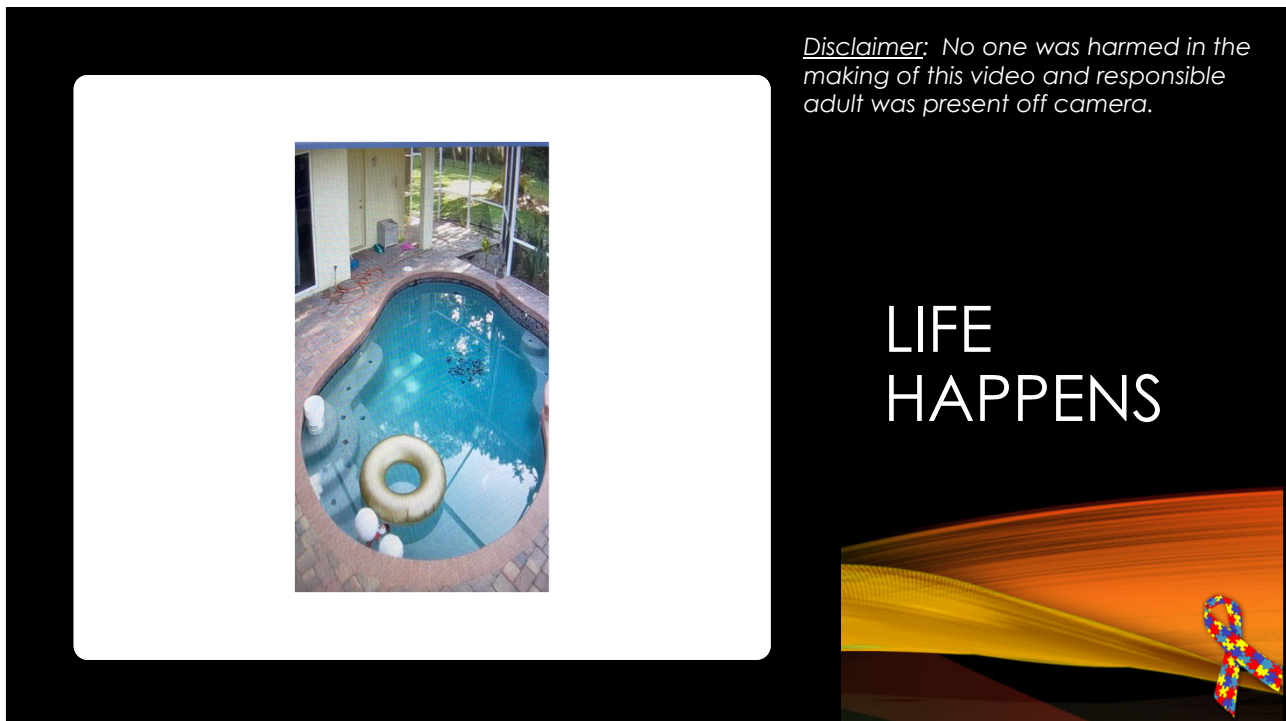


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THEY HAVE FIRST DAYS OF SCHOOL

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Disclaimer: No one was harmed in the making of this video and responsible adult was present off camera.

LIFE HAPPENS

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SPECIAL NEEDS CHILDREN ARE CHILDREN FIRST

Their disabilities are just one part of them

- ❖ AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDER
- ❖ ADHD
- ❖ ODD – OPPOSITIONAL DEFIANCE DISORDER
- ❖ DOWN SYNDROME
- ❖ TURNERS SYNDROME
- ❖ CEREBRAL PALSY

**NOT EVERY
DISABILITY
IS VISIBLE.**

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COMMON RELATIONSHIP ISSUES FOR SPECIAL NEEDS PARENTS

- **Parent in Denial – Refuses to:**
 - accept child's diagnosis
 - cooperate with treatment and therapy
 - pay for treatment and therapy
 - follow through with therapist interventions
- **Overtreating parent:**
 - overstates child's disabilities
 - overtreats child
 - seeks out any doctor to receive a diagnosis.
 - uses diagnosis as advantage in custody proceedings
 - claims other parent isn't following treatment
 - disagrees with medications



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SPECIAL EDUCATION CONSIDERATIONS

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SPECIAL EDUCATION CONSIDERATIONS

- ⇒ Introduction to the ADA
- ⇒ Introduction to the IDEA
- ⇒ IEPs v. 504 Plans
- ⇒ Parent & Child Rights in Special Education Services
- ⇒ Scholarships & School Options



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SPECIAL EDUCATION CONSIDERATIONS: INTRODUCTION TO THE FEDERAL LAWS

IDEA (K-12)	Section 504 (K-12 / College)	ADA (College/Work)
Protect all persons with educational disabilities (ages 3-21 or until graduation)	Protect all persons with disabilities from discrimination in educational setting	Protects all persons with a disability from discrimination in educational/work setting
Educational act providing federal \$\$\$ to guarantee special education services	A civil rights law prohibiting discrimination in programs & activities public & private	A civil rights law prohibiting discrimination in employment & public services
FAPE – education & related services to prepare children for further education, employment, and independent living.	FAPE – Education comparable to students without disabilities	“Reasonable accommodations” are those required for the person to perform essential functions of the job
Transition Services		

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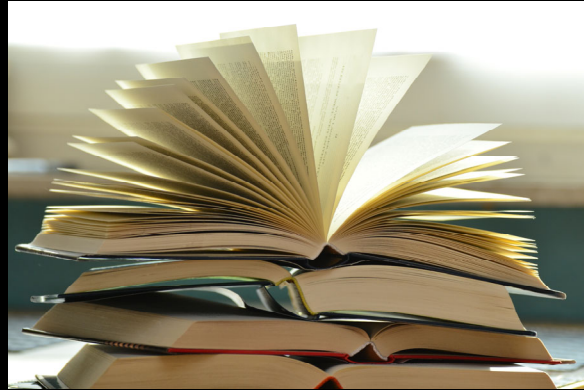
SPECIAL EDUCATION CONSIDERATIONS: BASIC EDUCATIONAL RIGHTS

- Jennifer Laviano & Julie Swanson, ***Your Special Education Rights: What Your School District Isn't Telling You*** (Skyhorse Publishing 2017) [available on Amazon]
- Pam Wright & Pete Wright, ***From Emotions to Advocacy***, (2d Ed., Harbor House Law Press 2020) [available on <https://www.wrightslaw.com/>]
- Peter W.D. Wright, Esq. & Pamela Darr Wright, MA, MSW, ***Special Education Law***, (2d Ed., Harbor House Law Press 2007) [available on <https://www.wrightslaw.com/>]
- ***Crip Camp: A Disability Revolution*** [<https://cripcamp.com/>] [available on Netflix]

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SPECIAL EDUCATION CONSIDERATIONS: BASIC EDUCATIONAL RIGHTS

- Federal Standards Establish the minimums
- State standards can go above federal standards
- Administrative law explains the “how”



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SPECIAL EDUCATION CONSIDERATIONS: BASIC EDUCATIONAL RIGHTS

Students with disabilities have rights:

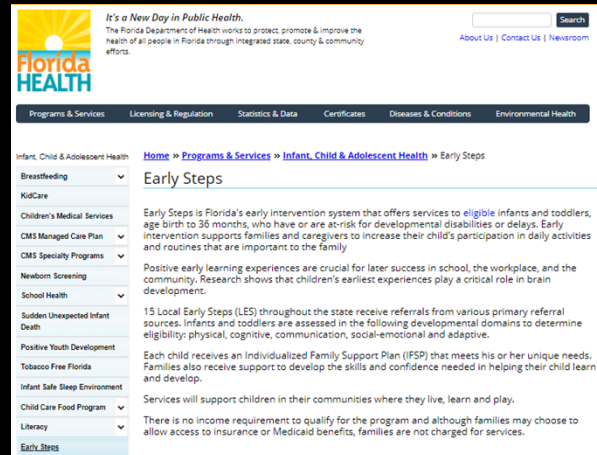
- To attend school
- Receive free education
- Receive appropriate education
- Receive reasonable accommodations for their disability(ies)
- Advance in their education
- To have the services and supports come to them (special education is not a “place”)
- To receive education in the *least restrictive environment*
- To have a second opinion about eligibility

What if the school said that about a [choose a race] child?

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SPECIAL EDUCATION CONSIDERATIONS: BASIC EDUCATIONAL RIGHTS

- Early intervention system (under IDEA)
- Services to eligible 0 – 36 months with significant delays or a condition likely to result in a developmental delay
- Services: speech therapy, physical therapy, and occupational therapy are provided in the child's home
- Typically, no cost and/or covered by insurance/Medicaid.



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SPECIAL EDUCATION CONSIDERATIONS: BASIC EDUCATIONAL RIGHTS

- At 36 months, a child is eligible for the public school system.
- Federal Laws:
 - Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act ("504 Plan")
 - Individuals with Disabilities Education Act ("IDEA")
 - Individualized Education Plan (IEP)



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EDUCATIONAL CONSIDERATIONS: INITIATING EDUCATIONAL EVALUATION PROCESS

20 USC § 1412

(3) CHILD FIND

(A) In general

All children with disabilities residing in the [State](#), inwards of the [State](#) and children with disabilities attending school, and who are in need of [special education](#), a practical method is developed and implemented to ensure that all children receiving needed [special education](#) and [related services](#).



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(B) Request for initial evaluation

Consistent with subparagraph (D), either a [parent](#) of a child, or a [State educational agency](#), other [State](#) agency, or [local educational agency](#) may initiate a request for an initial evaluation to determine if the child is a [child with a disability](#).

(C) Procedures

(i) In general

Such initial evaluation shall consist of procedures—

(I) to determine whether a child is a [child with a disability](#) (as defined in 1401 of this title) within 60 days of receiving parental consent for the evaluation, or, if the [State](#) establishes a timeframe within which the evaluation must be conducted, within such timeframe; and

(II) to determine the educational needs of such child.

SPECIAL EDUCATION CONSIDERATIONS: INITIATING EDUCATIONAL EVALUATION PROCESS

20 USC § 1414 (A)(1)

IDEA (2004):

Initial Evaluations and eligibility must be completed within 60 days of receiving parental consent.

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EDUCATIONAL CONSIDERATIONS: 504 PLANS V. INDIVIDUAL EDUCATION PLANS

504 Plans	IEPs
Focused on access to education	Focused on access to curriculum
Accommodations for access to education	Accommodations for access to curriculum
Modifications in Delivery	Modifications in delivery and curriculum
Peanut allergy	Partial hemispherectomy

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SPECIAL EDUCATION CONSIDERATIONS: SCHOLARSHIPS & SCHOOL OPTIONS

McKay Scholarship

Florida's school choice programs allow parents to choose the best educational setting—public or private—for their child. The McKay Scholarship Program for Students with Disabilities is providing nearly 30,000 Florida students with special needs the opportunity to attend a participating private school in the 2021-2022 school year. The McKay Scholarship Program also offers parents the choice to transfer their eligible child to another public school.

Effective July 1, 2022, the McKay Scholarship Program will join the [Family Empowerment Scholarship Program](#) under the Unique Abilities category (FES UA). Current McKay families will have the opportunity to remain in their current public or private school choice setting or to utilize the additional options available under the FES UA education savings account model to further customize their child's education experience for their specific needs.

[McKay transition to FES: FAQs](#)

[McKay Parents](#)

[McKay FAQs](#)

[McKay Private Schools](#)

<https://www.fldoe.org/schools/school-choice/k-12-scholarship-programs/mckay/>

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SPECIAL EDUCATION CONSIDERATIONS: SCHOLARSHIPS & SCHOOL OPTIONS



Mission

Step Up For Students empowers families to pursue and engage in the most appropriate learning options for their children, with an emphasis on families who lack the information and financial resources to access these options. By pursuing this mission, we help public education fulfill the promise of equal opportunity.

Step Up For Students is a state-approved nonprofit scholarship funding organization that helps administer four scholarships for Florida schoolchildren: the Florida Tax Credit Scholarship Program (FTC) for lower to middle income families, the Family Empowerment Scholarship (FES) for lower to middle income families and students with unique abilities (formerly Gardiner), the Hope Scholarship for public school students who are bullied or victims of violence and the Reading Scholarship Accounts for public school students in third through fifth grade who struggle with reading.

Public education is rooted in the promise of equal educational opportunity, and nowhere is that covenant more relevant than in the lives of struggling or disadvantaged children.

These scholarships strengthen public education by offering options to struggling schoolchildren. We consider Step Up For Students a partner of public schools in giving all students the tools toward success. We do this by empowering parents through the scholarship programs so that they might have an equal opportunity to discover educational options that work best for their children.

<https://www.stepupforstudents.org/about-us/mission/>

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SPECIAL EDUCATION CONSIDERATIONS: SCHOLARSHIPS & SCHOOL OPTIONS

https://www.stepupforstudents.org/wp-content/uploads/Step-Up-For-Students_FES-Unique-Abilities-Scholarship-Amounts.pdf



STEP UP FOR STUDENTS

2022-23

FAMILY EMPOWERMENT (FORMERLY GARDINER) SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

Basic scholarship amounts for 2022-23

Students with a Level 1, 2 or 3 matrix of services OR those with diagnosis by a physician or psychologist will be awarded at the Matrix Level 251-253 indicated below.

For a student who received a scholarship in the 2020-2021 school year, the amount of the award will be the greater of the amount calculated below or the amount the student received for the 2020-2021 school year.

Matrix Level 251-253 for County	3 & 4 Years Grades K-3	Grades 4-8	Grades 9-12	Matrix Level 254	Matrix Level 255	Matrix Level 251-253 for County	3 & 4 Years Grades K-3	Grades 4-8	Grades 9-12	Matrix Level 254	Matrix Level 255
Alachua	9,372.00	8,805.00	8,802.00	19,169.00	26,911.00	Lake	9,730.00	9,166.00	9,163.00	19,060.00	26,782.00
Baker	9,928.00	9,373.00	9,369.00	19,349.00	26,960.00	Lee	10,773.00	10,185.00	10,181.00	20,078.00	28,138.00
Bay	9,673.00	9,113.00	9,110.00	19,123.00	26,798.00	Leon	10,342.00	9,781.00	9,777.00	19,000.00	26,699.00
Bradford	9,892.00	9,343.00	9,339.00	19,322.00	26,859.00	Levy	9,894.00	9,349.00	9,345.00	19,258.00	26,730.00
Brevard	9,495.00	8,923.00	8,919.00	19,358.00	27,205.00	Liberty	10,505.00	9,971.00	9,967.00	19,382.00	26,706.00
Broward	10,014.00	9,425.00	9,421.00	19,782.00	27,861.00	Madison	10,367.00	9,836.00	9,832.00	18,762.00	26,043.00
Calhoun	10,141.00	9,608.00	9,604.00	19,196.00	26,502.00	Manatee	9,935.00	9,361.00	9,357.00	19,459.00	27,332.00
Charlotte	9,904.00	9,335.00	9,331.00	19,670.00	27,470.00	Marion	9,666.00	9,119.00	9,115.00	18,744.00	26,249.00
Citrus	10,356.00	9,811.00	9,807.00	18,673.00	26,145.00	Martin	10,385.00	9,797.00	9,793.00	20,206.00	28,259.00
Clay	9,120.00	8,553.00	8,549.00	19,183.00	26,946.00	Monroe	12,192.00	11,584.00	11,579.00	22,665.00	30,996.00
Collier	12,018.00	11,410.00	11,406.00	21,572.00	29,910.00	Nassau	9,784.00	9,213.00	9,209.00	19,602.00	27,422.00

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FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

- ▶ Basic Overview of Governmental Benefits
- ▶ Medicaid Waivers
- ▶ Special Needs Trusts
- ▶ ABLE Accounts
- ▶ Introduction to Vocational Rehabilitation and Other Transition Services



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FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS BASIC OVERVIEW OF GOVERNMENTAL BENEFITS

Two types of government benefits:

- Based on income ("means tested")
- Regardless of income



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FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS: OVERVIEW OF GOVERNMENT BENEFITS

- Social Security
 - Social Security Disability Insurance ("SSDI")
 - Supplemental Security Income ("SSI") (means tested)
- Medicaid (means tested)
- Other Public Benefits
 - Vocational Rehabilitation
 - Supported Employment Services



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FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS MEDICAID CRISIS WAIVER

- Each state establishes its own Medicare and Medicaid Program premiums, eligibility, optional benefits, and financial structure if they are superior to the federal minimum standards
- Florida uses the Medicaid waiver program to make children with certain disabilities eligible to receive Medicaid benefits regardless of the family's income. **Medicaid Crisis Waiver.**
- Upon receipt, the person is eligible for:
 - Support planning, family care, home subsidies
 - Residential habilitation, personal supports, behavior assistance
 - And more

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FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS MEDICAID CRISIS WAIVER

For more information:

- Agency for Persons with Disabilities:
<https://apd.myflorida.com/customers/application/>
- FLA. ADMIN. CODE 65G-1.047, *Waiver Enrollment for Children in the Child Welfare System* (2007), <https://www.flrules.org/gateway/ruleno.asp?id=65G-1.047>.
- In Florida, this program is administered by the Agency for Persons with Disabilities ("APD"). APD Cares, AGENCY FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES, <https://apd.myflorida.com/> (last visited Aug. 6, 2021).
- Due to funding constraints, there is a wait list for these services which is managed based on statutorily-established criteria. Fla. Stat. § 393.065 (2020).

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FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS SPECIAL NEEDS TRUSTS

- Specially designed trusts (VERY UNIQUE)
- Three Kinds:
 - Self-Settled Trusts (aka "First Party Trusts")
 - Third Party Trusts
 - Pooled Special Needs Trusts

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FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS ABLE ACCOUNTS

- Special Accounts
- Created under a 2014 law
- Save money tax-free to spend on qualified expenses
- Think of it as a 529 plan for disabled persons
- Focused on providing additional spending money beyond what a SNT can provide
- Protects the person from losing means tested government benefits



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SPECIAL EDUCATION CONSIDERATIONS: TRANSITIONS OUT OF SCHOOL

- 20 USC 1401 (34) – Definition of transition services
 - Results-oriented process
 - Focused on improving the child's academic and functional achievement
 - Goal is to facilitate child's movement from school to post-school activities:
 - Post-Secondary Education
 - Vocational Education
 - Integrated Employment
 - Continuing & Adult Education
 - Adult Services
 - Independent Living
 - Community Participation

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SPECIAL EDUCATION CONSIDERATIONS: TRANSITIONS OUT OF SCHOOL

34 CFR 300.321

(b) Transition services participants.

(1) In accordance with [paragraph \(a\)\(7\)](#) of this section, the [public agency](#) must invite a [child with a disability](#) to attend the child's IEP Team meeting if a purpose of the meeting will be the consideration of the [postsecondary](#) goals for the child and the [transition services](#) needed to assist the child in reaching those goals under § 300.320(b).

(2) If the child does not attend the IEP Team meeting, the [public agency](#) must take other steps to ensure that the child's preferences and interests are considered.

(3) To the extent appropriate, with the [consent](#) of the [parents](#) or a child who has reached the age of majority, in implementing the requirements of [paragraph \(b\)\(1\)](#) of this section, the [public agency](#) must invite a representative of any [participating agency](#) that is likely to be responsible for providing or paying for [transition services](#).

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SPECIAL EDUCATION CONSIDERATIONS: TRANSITIONS OUT OF SCHOOL

*Florida Developmental
Disabilities Council*

[https://www.fddc.org/
publications/](https://www.fddc.org/publications/)

Planning Ahead

A handbook for parents, family members and guardians of adults with developmental disabilities. Provides information that will help identify and plan the direction and future regarding the quality of life family members' desire. Personal information summary included to ensure the safety and happiness of a surviving family member with a disability.

[Click here to download the Planning Ahead PDF \(English version\)](#)

[Click here to download the Planning Ahead PDF \(Spanish version\)](#)

Connections: Tools and Resources for Adult Life

Connections provides information that connects individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities and their families to tools and resources that will support their transition into adult life.

[Click here to download - Connections: Tools and Resources for Adult Life - Illustrated Guide \[English\] \(PDF\)](#)

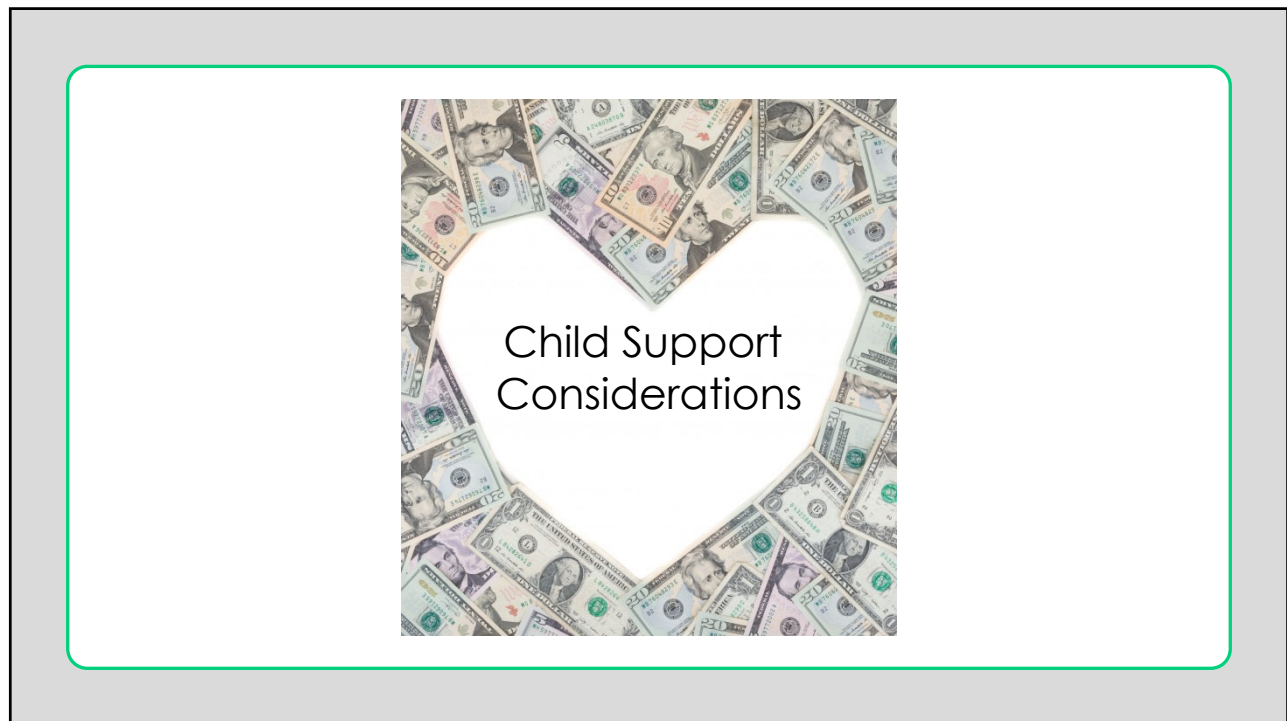
[Click here to download - Connections: Tools and Resources for Adult Life - Text Only \[English\] \(PDF\)](#)

[Click here to download - Connections: Tools and Resources for Adult Life \[Spanish\] \(PDF\)](#)

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SPECIAL NEEDS CHILDREN: CHILD SUPPORT CONSIDERATIONS

Cost of childcare

Fla. Stat. § (7) Child care costs incurred due to employment, job search, or education calculated to result in employment or to enhance income of current employment of either parent shall be added to the basic obligation. After the child care costs are added, any moneys prepaid by a parent for child care costs for the child or children of this action shall be deducted from that parent's child support obligation for that child or those children. **Child care costs may not exceed the level required to provide quality care from a licensed source.**

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CHILD SUPPORT CONSIDERATIONS

- ✓ Child Support Deviations
- ✓ Impact of Social Security Income on Child Support (parent v. child)
- ✓ Post-Majority Support Considerations
- ✓ Best Practices for Unreimbursed Expenses
- ✓ Best Practices In- vs. Out-of-Network Providers



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CHILD SUPPORT & ALIMONY CONSIDERATIONS



- Main caretaker of child may not be able to work full time or not at all
- Cost of childcare may outweigh the income-earning ability of a parent

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CHILD SUPPORT CONSIDERATIONS: CHILD SUPPORT DEVIATIONS

(11)(a) The court may adjust the total minimum child support award, or either or both parents' share of the total minimum child support award, based upon the following deviation factors:

1. Extraordinary medical, psychological, educational, or dental expenses.
2. Independent income of the child, **not to include moneys received by a child from supplemental security income.**
3. The payment of support for a parent which has been regularly paid and for which there is a demonstrated need.
5. The age of the child, taking into account the greater needs of older children.
6. Special needs, such as costs that may be associated with the disability of a child, that have traditionally been met within the family budget even though fulfilling those needs will cause the support to exceed the presumptive amount established by the guidelines.
11. Any other adjustment that is needed to achieve an equitable result which may include, but not be limited to, a reasonable and necessary existing expense or debt. Such expense or debt may include, but is not limited to, a reasonable and necessary expense or debt that the parties jointly incurred during the marriage.

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CHILD SUPPORT CONSIDERATIONS: IMPACT OF SOCIAL SECURITY INCOME

Child's Social Security Income

This would be for the *child's* disability

Fla. Stat. § 61.30(11)(a) The court may adjust the total minimum child support award, or either or both parents' share of the total minimum child support award, based upon the following deviation factors:

2. Independent income of the child, **not to include moneys received by a child from supplemental security income.**

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CHILD SUPPORT CONSIDERATIONS: IMPACT OF SOCIAL SECURITY INCOME

Parent's social security income that includes child benefits

Fla. Stat. § 61.30(2)(a)(8) income includes "social security benefits"

Initial Child Support Calculation

Williams v. Williams, 560 So. 2d 308 (Fla. 1st DCA 1990)

- Father's only income was his social security (retirement) plus child benefit
- Father's income should include Father's benefit plus child's benefit
- Absent a special agreement or provision to the contrary, child benefit should be credited against that parent's child support obligation

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CHILD SUPPORT CONSIDERATIONS: IMPACT OF SOCIAL SECURITY INCOME

Parent's social security income that includes child benefits

Wallace v. Dept., Rev. ex Rel. Cutter, 774 So. 2d 804 (Fla. 2d DCA 2000)

- When social security disability insurance benefits or supplemental security is received because of parent's disability, those benefits and the dependent benefits that accompany it are income attributable to the parent
- Parent who receives the disability benefit should be given a child support credit for the disability benefit amount paid to the child(ren)

Gomez v. Gomez, 736 So. 2d 119 (Fla. 4th DCA 1999)

- Social security disability benefits received by child because of a parent's disability should not be factored into a child support calculation

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CHILD SUPPORT CONSIDERATIONS: IMPACT OF SOCIAL SECURITY INCOME

Parent's social security income that includes child benefits

Credit when benefits are received after a child support order exists

Kirwan v. Kirwan, 606 So. 2d 771 (Fla. 5th DCA 1992)

- Improper to give a credit towards arrearages accrued for child benefits paid later where the disabled parent failed to timely file a modification petition

Francisco v. Francisco, 505 So. 2d 1102 (Fla. 2d DCA 1987)

- Trial court's application of a credit towards child support arrearages for child benefits paid where the other parent failed to commence and enforcement proceeding for non-payment

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CHILD SUPPORT CONSIDERATIONS: IMPACT OF SOCIAL SECURITY INCOME

Parent's social security income that includes child benefits

State v. Linden, 584 So. 2d 207 (Fla. 1st DCA 1991)

- Alabama child support order existed
- If the social security benefits were considered by the AL judge and a separate payment required, the father is not entitled to a credit
- If the AL court did consider the child's receipt of benefit, then the AL decree requiring payment through the clerk is a "special provision" referred to in *Williams*

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CHILD SUPPORT CONSIDERATIONS: POST-MAJORITY CHILD SUPPORT



- ✓ Support beyond the age of 18 (Fla. Stat. § 743.07)
- ✓ Means Tested Government Benefits

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CHILD SUPPORT CONSIDERATIONS: BEST PRACTICES: CHILD EXPENSES

- ✓Insurance coverage
- ✓Parenting Plan and/or Final Judgment language needed
 - ✓What if a parent “objects” to an expense being incurred?
 - ✓When is an expense “unreasonable” or “unnecessary”?
- ✓Should they be included in the child support guidelines calculation or paid separately? (Pros & Cons to each)
- ✓Can extracurricular activities be “required” for the child’s well-being?

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CHILD SUPPORT CONSIDERATIONS: BEST PRACTICES: CHILD EXPENSES

Navigating parental disputes:

- Child psychologist
- Developmental pediatrician
- Neurologist
- Behavioral Therapist Specialist
- Collaborative process
- Parenting Coordinator
- Parent Coach
- Guardian ad Litem
- Training from specialized organizations

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In-Network VS Out-Of-Network



CHILD SUPPORT
CONSIDERATIONS:
BEST PRACTICES:
INSURANCE

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separate in
break. nour
interrupt
pause in
activit

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BEST PRACTICES IN PARENTING PLANS: COMMUNICATION

- Between parent and child
 - Role of video calls
 - Frequency
 - Duration
 - Time of call
 - Chronological & developmental progress of child
 - Quality v. quantity
- Between the parents
 - Role of co-parenting apps

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BEST PRACTICES IN PARENTING PLANS: PARENTAL RESPONSIBILITY

What harm can come of the child if/when parents don't agree on a major decision involving the child's special needs?

Fla. Stat. § 61.13(2)a.

In ordering shared parental responsibility, the court may consider the expressed desires of the parents and **may grant to one party the ultimate responsibility over specific aspects of the child's welfare or may divide those responsibilities between the parties based on the best interests of the child.** Areas of responsibility may include education, health care, and any other responsibilities that the court finds unique to a particular family.



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BEST PRACTICES IN PARENTING PLANS: TIMESHARING

Routine
Routine
Routine

Transitioning to
kindergarten
or "school
age"

Changing with
age

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BEST PRACTICES IN PARENTING PLANS: ADDITIONAL CLAUSES

- Therapy received in school v. out of school
- Accountability for administration of medications
- Second opinions / evaluations of child
- Parental involvement in scheduling & attending appointments



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BEST PRACTICES IN PARENTING PLANS: ADDITIONAL CLAUSES

Checklist

- ▶ You don't know what you don't know
- ▶ What you don't know may be detrimental to the child
- ▶ Search for resources
 - ▶ Mentors
 - ▶ Organizations
 - ▶ Other professionals
- ▶ Children's needs change over time
- ▶ Transition time (14+) is critical
- ▶ Plan ahead

Yes

No

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ADDITIONAL RESOURCES



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ADDITIONAL RESOURCES (NON-EXHAUSTIVE)

1. Agency for Persons with Disabilities (ADP): Florida governmental organization tasked with providing support services and resources for qualifying persons with disabilities. <https://apd.myflorida.com/>
2. American Academy of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry (AACAP): This organization's website provides a wealth of informational and educational resources on a variety of childhood and adolescent conditions. Website: <https://www.aacap.org/>
3. American Council of the Blind (ACB): This organization is comprised of persons who are blind or visually impaired who seek equality and independence. Website: <https://www.acb.org/>
4. American Foundation for the Blind (AFB): This organization provides resources to persons with vision loss and their families. Website: <https://www.afb.org/>
5. American Psychiatric Association: This organization and website promote awareness, education, and resources about and for persons with mental illness. Website: <https://www.psychiatry.org/>
6. Anxiety and Depression Association of America (ADAA): This organization exists to prevent, treat, and cure anxiety, depression, and related disorders through education and research. Website: <https://www.adaa.org/>

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ADDITIONAL RESOURCES (NON-EXHAUSTIVE)

7. Center for Autism and Related Disabilities (CARD): There are various CARD chapters throughout Florida. This free community-based program exists to optimize the potential of persons with autism and related disabilities. CARD University of Miami and Nova Southeastern University Website: <https://www.umcard.org/home/> and CARD University of South Florida Website: <http://card-usf.fmhi.usf.edu/index.html>
8. Childhood Arthritis and Rheumatology Research Alliance (CARRA): This organization conducts research to prevent, treat, and cure childhood arthritis and other rheumatic diseases. It also partners with children and their families, so research addresses the most important questions to those impacted by the conditions. Website: <https://carragroup.org/>
9. Consortium for Citizens with Disabilities: This coalition of national organizations advocates for “federal public policy that ensures the self-determination, independence, empowerment, integration and inclusion of children and adults with disabilities in all aspects of society.” Website: <http://www.c-c-d.org/>
10. Foundation Fighting Blindness: This organization funds research to find cures for blinding retinal diseases. It has a wealth of research and information about various conditions that cause blindness or vision impairment. Website: <https://www.fightingblindness.org/>
11. Margaret A. “Peggy” Graham, THE MANY MEANINGS OF “SPECIAL NEEDS”, 42 ABA Fam. Advocate 6 (Winter 2020).

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ADDITIONAL RESOURCES (NON-EXHAUSTIVE)

12. Guide Dogs for the Blind: This organization seeks to create partnerships between blind and visually impaired people, dogs, and communities. Website: <https://www.guidedogs.com/>
13. Hearing Loss Association of America (HLAA): This organization was established and continues to be run by people with hearing loss to educate and provide resources for persons with this disability. Website: <https://www.hearingloss.org/>
14. Learning Disabilities Association of America (LDA): LDA supports and educates persons with learning disabilities and advocates for their success. Website: <https://ldaamerica.org/>
15. National Federation of the Blind: This organization is among the oldest and largest national organizations of blind persons in the United States and exists to provide information and support to blind persons and build a community full of opportunities for them. Website: <https://nfb.org/>
16. National Institute of Arthritis and Musculoskeletal and Skin Diseases: This organization supports research into the causes, treatment, and prevention of arthritis and musculoskeletal and skin diseases. Website: <https://www.niams.nih.gov/>

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ADDITIONAL RESOURCES (NON-EXHAUSTIVE)

17. National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH): This federal agency provides research and education on mental disorders. Website: <https://www.nimh.nih.gov/index.shtml>
18. Next for Autism: Advancing Futures for Adults with Autism (AFAA): This organization strives to design and launch innovative programs to enhance the future of autistic persons. Website: <https://www.nextforautism.org/>
19. Pacer Center: A center providing information and training for families of children and youth who have any disability. Website: <https://www.pacer.org/>
20. Philip Schipani, *Special Needs: Definitions and Qualifications*. In *Special Needs Children and Family Law*, THE FLORIDA BAR CONTINUING LEGAL EDUCATION COMMITTEE AND THE FAMILY LAW SECTION (Oct. 11, 2019).
21. Spina Bifida Association: This organization devotes itself to research, advocating, and education about spina bifida, offering a wealth of resources to persons with the birth defect. Website: <https://www.spinabifidaassociation.org/>

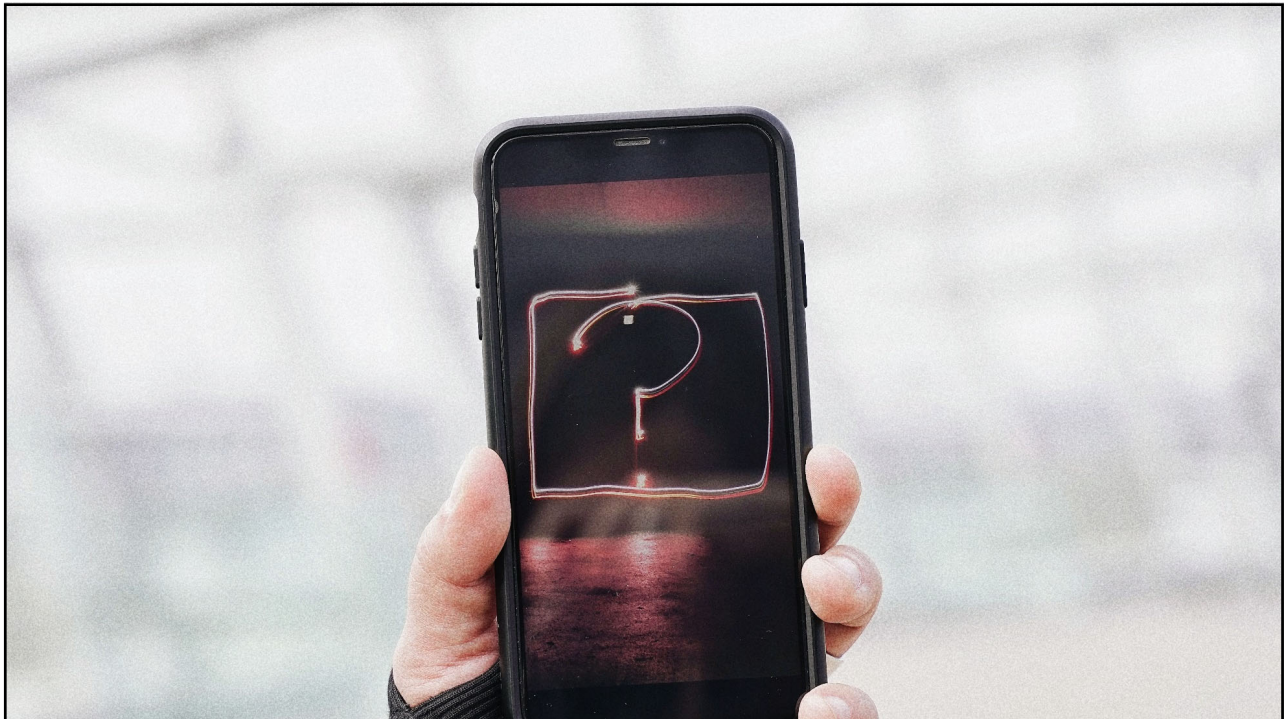
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ADDITIONAL RESOURCES (NON-EXHAUSTIVE)



22. The ARC: This nationwide organization promotes and protects persons with intellectual and developmental disabilities so they can enjoy full participation within their communities. This website offers links to other relevant organizations and websites and including ones that address advocacy, employment, and initiatives. Website: <https://thearc.org/>
23. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services: Parenting a Child with a Disability: this website includes an extensive Q&A on resources for families with children. Website: <https://www.hhs.gov/answers/programs-for-families-and-children/index.html>

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THANK YOU!

CLE #2208193N



Sarah E. Kay, Esq., BCS
Kay Family Law PLLC
Kayfamilylaw.com
sarah@kayfamilylaw.com
Tampa, FL



Philip J. Schipani, Esq., BCS
Schipani Norman & McLain PA
manasotalawyer.com
Phil@manasotalawyer.com
Sarasota, FL