

Legal Guardianships

The Facts



What is a legal guardianship?

A legal guardianship is a decision by a judge that a responsible person over the age of 18 will have custody of you. A guardianship does not terminate the rights of your parents, but it does take away your parents' ability to make decisions about your life.

What does a guardian do?

A guardian is someone who cares for you and makes decisions that a parent would usually make, which means they are in charge of things like:

- making sure you have food and clothes
- supporting your academic goals
- taking you to see a doctor when you are sick or hurt

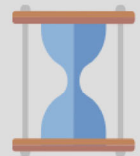


How do I get a legal guardianship?

If you are 12 or older, you can ask the Superior Court of your county to make an adult your guardian. If you are younger than 12, the person you want to be your guardian can ask the Court. A judge will decide if the guardianship is in your best interest.

How long does a guardianship last?

A guardianship lasts until you either: turn 18, get married, are legally emancipated, or are adopted. A judge can also end the guardianship if: your guardian, or someone else, asks the court to end it AND the judge decides that the guardianship is not in your best interest anymore.



Can't I just live with another adult, with the permission of a parent?

Yes, but sometimes it's harder for that adult to meet your needs because they do not have the legal authority to do so. Here are some examples of things that are harder without a guardianship:

1. Health insurance companies won't cover a minor on an adult's policy unless the adult is a parent or guardian.
2. Some medical providers won't care for a minor without the signature of a parent or guardian.
3. Some school issues require a parent or guardian's involvement.

Pro-Tip:

Even without a guardianship, the adult you live with can sometimes take care of your needs with a Caregiver's Authorization Affidavit. Contact Legal Services for Children if you want help figuring out if the Affidavit will work for you.

Legal Services for Children provides free legal and social services to people under 18 in the San Francisco Bay Area.



1254 Market Street, 3rd Floor
San Francisco, CA 94102
<http://www.lsc-sf.org/>

Walk Ins Welcome:
W: 4pm - 6pm
Th: 3pm - 5pm

(415) 863-3762
Intake Line Open M, W, Th
1:30pm - 4:30pm