



Prevention PLAN

Keeping Families together in time of Crisis

BY
Aldea Clairemont-LaParr

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Supporting Parents with Developmental Disabilities

<http://supportparentswithdd.com/>

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Introduction

What happens when first responders end up at the home where the head of the household has a Developmental Disability? This book is a great tool to start the conversation and to help plan ahead. I live in community without paid supports and have had a very successful life. As a family we have experience our share of trials when it comes to dealing with finances, raising our children, and most importantly keeping the family together.

In this book I share with you the biggest lesson that I have learned and may help other families where the head of the household have a developmental disability or ANY family. As someone with a speech impediment who cannot always speak when I get frustrated or stressed out, I've learned the need to write things down or type things out to use later when needed. Years ago I came up with the idea of having a document put together ahead of time in the event that I would have to provide first responders with detailed information. The document would be very helpful not only because of my speech, but also because of my memory loss while under stress.

In 2010, I attend a three day gathering of other individuals with disabilities, family members, and care providers. I had the amazing opportunity to share this with them to get their feedback. It was exciting to see the interest that it generated. Overwhelmingly it was agreed that I should go forward to share this. I then met with local law enforcement and emergency services to get their input. They were excited also and the sheriff pointed out how ALL families could benefit from have a written plan.

I hope that this book is not only a training tool an opportunity to see that ALL families need and can to stay together when given some extra tools.



Prevention Plan

A Written Plan - in the event of an emergency.

Many individuals with developmental disabilities now live independently in their communities. Often Parents with developmental disabilities who may need an extra helping hand or someone to talk to are afraid to ask for help in the fear of having their children taken away. This is the time that establishing relationships in the community is crucial. These relationships can lead to **a natural support system** which will enable parents with developmental disabilities to feel comfortable in asking for help when needed. The key is also to allow them to feel in control of their own lives and decisions. I created a document with this in mind.



The document that I created is called a "Prevention Plan". It will act as a **voice for the parents** in the event that the parents need to call for help or when emergency first responders need vital information that the parents may not be able to explain. The information in the plan may prevent the need for the parents and their children to be separated. In the plan will be a narrative of the family which will include cognitive and physical limitations of any family members, a brief history of any previous interventions that may have been needed with outcomes, and most importantly, a list of names and phone numbers of friends, family, and service providers if any to obtain additional information if needed versus extreme intervention which separates the parents from their children. This can eliminate the fear of parents with disabilities that their children will be instantly removed from their home. Removal should be a last resort, not the first response. This should be applied to ALL families and not just those with disabilities.

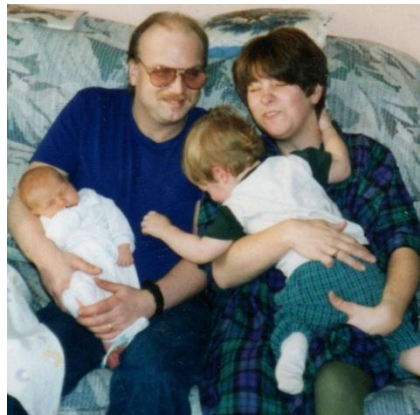


The Prevention Plan can be used by anyone. Individuals who receive services can have their staff help them. Someone living in the community may have friends or family help them. I also believe that if the children are school age, school staff may assist. This document could very well be used to link individuals to their communities.

As a parent with a physical disability I have been afraid myself in the past. Sometimes I encounter those who automatically believe that I have trouble understanding things and that I am unfit to be a parent. I was also a single parent when I had my first child. Later that year I started to date a man, he fell in love with both my son and I, and we were married.

My new husband had a disability as well. Unlike my Cerebral Palsy that limited my fine motor coordination and speech, his Cerebral Palsy affected his legs, and he had limited cognitive abilities with mental health issues. We were a team! I took care of planning and finances, he took care of the house and the property. We later had two more boys.

So many parents with developmentally disabilities are very successful and loving parents. Their children tend to be their biggest supporters, which in turn creates a very strong family unit. The last thing they need is to be separated from each other. The goal of the Prevention Plan is to clearly communicate that fact the one reading this document. Each family can make the plan as long or short, as detailed or as simple, as they decide is needed.

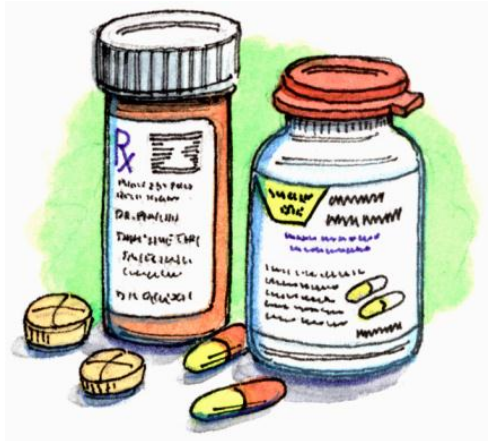


The following pages are available to assist parents and caregivers in facilitating a conversation that will lead to the most detailed Prevention Plan. I've included big pictures to assist with those who have limited cognitive abilities and may understand more when using pictures.

I have also included space for you to work right here with in this document. Just print out the pages and fill them in. When all is written down, then go back and find the most important information to put into the plan. No two plans should look alike. Your plan should content what you want it to.

The last page has a "Sample Layout" that will give a guideline on how to put everything together in a page or two to have available when needed. If it is easier, just fill in these pages and have them available.

4. Do you or anyone in your family take any medications that first responders may need to know about? Where are they stored? This is so very important for someone to know especially if a dose has been missed. For someone non-verbal, a medication chart attached to the plan may be a great asset to first responders.



Use the space below to work on this question.

Now take the answers above to decide what should go into your Preventive Plan. The following are suggested paragraph topics for you plan.

Plan Objective:

This is where information would go to explain why the Plan was written. While the Plan was written to assist first responders to a situation, it is also very detailed to show that the individuals(s) are competent to live on their own in the community with supports. This document explains those supports in order that the first responder does not rush to judgment which will lead to more distress.

SAMPLE: The following plan is intended to be used in the event of an emergency where intervention is needed and introduces the person reading this document to the family at risk. It is intended to inform the reader of the steps previously taken to prevent the situation and supports that can be contacted on my behalf.

Family, Address and Directions to Home:

This section is to inform the first responders how many people live in the home versus who may be present during the visit. By listing names, ages, and date of birth, there's a lot less wasted time trying to determine this information. Having the address and directions on the Plan also allows for timely confirmation and accuracy when reports need to be done and in the event that a follow up visit is necessary.

Family Description:

This section is to inform the first responders that there are family members in the household with developmental disabilities which may or may not limit their understanding of a situation. It is crucial that first responders know that to help them determine how to approach the individual. Without this information, the first responder may not understand why the individual is not cooperating or is behaving in a certain manor. Also include any behaviors by other family members that may lead to the need for intervention.

SAMPLE: Mother and Father both have Cerebral Palsy. Mother has no cognitive impairments. Father has mild cognitive impairments. All three children are able bodied with typical development. Oldest boy has very

deep rooted anger issues that are difficult to predict and will have occasional fits of rage the may lead to a need for intervention. Both other boys have not demonstrated any behaviors that deemed intervention, but they often react to his fits and then behaviors develop.

Previous Interventions:

This could be the most important section. This section should include previous interventions if any that took place and the outcomes. This will help to show that the parents are aware of what supports may be needed to keep the family together. Include the things that help you cope with parenting and how your children respond.

EXAMPLE: In 1998 when Andrew was 5 years old, the Home School Coordinator through Lewis County DSS was contacted by mom to help Andrew with behaviors while at school. Meetings at school led to home visits that enabled the family to gain more knowledge to deal with his behavior issues. As Andrew entered Middle School, the Home School Coordinator could no longer provide services, Aldea was referred to Mountain View Prevention Services where she was able to talk with a parent advocate who was able to help determine that Andrew’s behaviors were that of a typical strong willed child and there was no need to file a PNS. Aldea continues to utilize the parent advocate as a support for her to cope with ongoing issues until 2008.

Family Supports: (Can include Long Distance Supports)

Others who are work with the Family:

Medical Professionals:

These are people that can be contacted by phone. Extended family members/friends who may be able to assist with just a phone can.

SAMPLE:

Family Supports:

Church– XXX-XXX-XXX

Medical Professionals:

Medical Center – XXX-XXX-XXX

Family

Mother’s Mother – XXX-XXX-XXX

Mother’s Sister-in-law - XXX-XXX-XXX

Father’s Sister – XXX-XXX-XXX

Father’s Brother – XXX-XXX-XXX

Friends

Friend – XXX-XXX-XXX

Friend– XXX-XXX-XXX

Advocate- XXX-XXX-XXX

Sample Layout

Prevention PLAN
As of (date)

Plan Objective:

Try to keep this to one paragraph.

Family:

Mother/
Father/
Child/
Child/
Child/

Address: Street
City/State/Zip
Phone:
Directions:

Family Description:

Try to keep this short, but do not leave out what you feel is important for someone else to know. This is where the work book helped in deciding what should be put here.

Previous Interventions:

Put as much as you can here to help others know what has worked or not worked in the past.

Family Supports: (Can include Long Distance Supports)

Others who are work with the Family:

Medical Professionals:

List as many supports as you want in the event someone can't be reached.

Name/Title
Phone:

Name/Title
Phone:

Additional Info if family wants others to be aware.

A Very Special Thank You

I want to thank my three beautiful boys *Andrew, Timothy, Scott*, and my husband *Gary* of sixteen years, before his passing in 2010. He opened my eyes to the struggles of living independently with a cognitive disability.

I wish to acknowledge some colleagues in the field of who also happen to be wonderful friends who supported me in the making of this book.

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