



Chambliss Special Needs Plan

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Special Needs Planning

Chambliss Law Firm Monthly Editorial

"The Best Laid Plans..." How We Adapt for Loved Ones with Special Needs

by Jennifer Exum, Special Needs Planning Attorney

My doctor assured me that Wednesday in August that all was well and we would be delivering my still-growing boy on schedule in October, and she sent me home to catch up on some well-deserved rest. I saw her again that Friday as I was being prepped for delivery. For no apparent reason, my October baby had no intention of waiting.

As I grappled to understand the situation, my thoughts whipsawed from total panic to something more zen. The hospital staff did all they could to turn things around, but at a certain point, their efforts shifted from me to focus on my son who was determined to be born that day.

In this haze, I recalled a line that is commonly paraphrased from the poem "To a Mouse" by Robert Burns, "The best-laid plans of mice and men / Go oft awry," and I laughed out loud. It was not the first time that a remnant of my background as an English major appeared out of nowhere, but at that moment, the irony was immense. No one in my team of physicians, as brilliant and capable as they were, would have guessed that our best-laid plans would be so upended that day.

But, nevertheless, we adapt. At work, I'm an attorney who advises families seeking to protect their legacies and plan for future generations – I help my clients adapt all the time. Bumps in the road like death, divorce, illness, substance abuse, or financial hardship can cause a plan to shift, sometimes suddenly and these events are even more stressful when a family member has special needs.

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