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SPECIAL NEEDS ADVISORY

TOP 10 IDEAS TO IMPLEMENT THIS YEAR FOR FAMILIES WITH SPECIAL NEEDS CHILDREN

- 1. Start a video record of your family that includes your special needs child's strengths and challenges.** This will be an invaluable resource for tracking progress in future years.
- 2. Get registered for all the services and benefits you are entitled to receive.** If you live in Illinois, be sure to register your child with special needs on the Prioritization of Urgency of Needs for Services (PUNS) list. PUNS is the IL waiting list for services.
- 3. Create a safety plan that focuses on the challenges your special needs family member may have in the event of an emergency.** Practice your responses to fires, floods, tornadoes, and other potential disasters.
- 4. Alert your community public safety officers (fire, police, and paramedics) to your child's condition and/or challenges.** Information saves lives and can also help in the event your child becomes lost or disoriented in the community.
- 5. Take a vacation without your children to get the much needed respite that you deserve.** Vacations may feel selfish but they allow you to relax and re-energize.
- 6. Increase your knowledge of your legal rights with respect to public services and/or education.** Attending a conference, perusing credible web sites, and talking with attorneys will give you the confidence that you are doing everything that you can.
- 7. Find trusted child care and create a short-list of people who can be contacted to help with your children when short-term crises arise.**
- 8. Set time aside to connect with your spouse; make sure you understand each other's feelings; agree on the priorities for your children.** Divorce rates are very high in families with special needs members. Good communication helps maintain marriages.
- 9. Create or review your estate plan to ensure that your wishes will be carried out and your loved ones will receive the proper care.**
- 10. Join or start a group of parents who have similar family challenges to share stories, knowledge, and recommendations.**

These recommendations are provided solely as a reference and are not intended to replace counseling from qualified professionals. Please contact Mike Walther if you would like more information about Oak Wealth Advisors and our services for families with special needs members.