

This Weekly Newsletter
is brought to you by

HOOK LAW CENTER
Legal Power for Seniors

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Autism - The Invisible Disability

Some might call autism the invisible disability. It's invisible because, with a casual glance, many of the people with autism look like anyone else. It's only when interacting with the person with autism that one notices that they have trouble making eye contact, answering in complete sentences, or following simple directions. Complicating matters is the fact that not all people with autism are severely impaired. Some have only mild impairments, affecting social skills in a minor way. Their intellect is unaffected, and they can pursue any job or career that they desire. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reported in March 2012, that based on a 2008 study, 1 in 88 children in the US have some form of autism spectrum disorder. This represents a 78 % increase since 2002 numbers. (Elizabeth Simpson, "Ready or Not," The Virginian Pilot, 7-8-12) Why the increase? Most probably it is due to better understanding and diagnosis of the disorder.

So what are the implications for independent, adult functioning? With autism no broad generalities can be made. However, it can be said that for a significant number of adults with autism, there will be a need for continued monitoring and support throughout their adult life. This means that they will need supervised living situations (Availability varies from state to state. Many live at home.), coaching for employment, and assistance with tasks of daily living, such as bill-paying, etc. For example, the young man from Virginia Beach, VA featured in the July 8, 2012 Virginian-Pilot article, had graduated from high school with a special education diploma. This is not an academic diploma, so his post-secondary school options would be more limited than someone graduating with a standard or advanced studies diploma.

Autism - The Invisible Disability (con't.)

He had made tremendous progress over his school career, but he still had to be prompted to answer in more than a 2-3 word-response to questions. He has only just begun to be aware of social cues, and complimenting his mother on her cooking was a real milestone for him, his mother said.

In order to plan for an adult who cannot function independently, his parents/guardians may want to consult a certified elder law attorney who has experience with special needs trusts. The certified elder law attorney can suggest ways to protect family assets, while still providing for the care of the adult with disabilities throughout his/her lifetime. The attorneys at the Hook Law Center are specialists in this area.

Ask Kit Kat: Pets Panting?

Hook Law Center: Kit Kat, Why do dogs and cats pant?

Kit Kat Well, that is because both dogs and cats have sweat glands in their paws. However, when it is very hot (like this past July), those glands are not enough to cool us down. Panting brings cool air over our tongues and helps to cool us faster. Now we cats are not usually silly enough to get overheated as often as dogs. But sometimes we just can't help it. We might get caught in an attic, for example. This happened to one of my fellow cats, Brigitte, who lived with the Hook family from 1981-2000. She was a Siamese cat, and she loved to get in the attic. If it were summertime, she would come out panting. The Hooks had to be careful she didn't get stuck there.

(Technical information taken from Catherine Price, "What's going on inside your pet's head?" [Parade Magazine](#), July 8, 2012)

Upcoming Seminars

Hook Law Center is presenting a Veterans Aid & Attendance Seminar on September 27th at Churchland House, 4916 West Norfolk Road, Portsmouth, Virginia 23703. To R.S.V.P. for this seminar, please call 757-483-1780 or 757-399-7506.

For more information on other upcoming seminars, please visit hooklawcenter.com/resources/upcoming-seminars.html or call (757) 399-7506.

Distribution of This Newsletter

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