

Advance Care Planning and Children

Young people under the age of 18 can also do Advance Care Planning, but there are some differences in the process for adults.

Young people under 18 years of age are **not able** to appoint a Medical Treatment Decision Maker. Their parent or guardian is the Medical Treatment Decision Maker.

Young people under 18 years of age with decision-making capacity **are able** to appoint a Support Person. This person can be another child. The role of the Support Person is to help the patient gather and understand information, to help them make their own decisions, and to advocate for their preferences and values in the event that the person loses capacity.

Young people under 18 years of age, with decision-making capacity, **are able** to complete an Advance Care Directive. They may complete a Values and/or Instructional Directive.

The witnessing requirement is that one witness must be a 'Child and adolescent psychiatrist' or a 'Clinical neuropsychologist with special qualifications and experience'. It is highly recommended that the second witness be the main treating doctor.

Please Note: The Supreme Court may override an Instructional Directive refusing life-saving treatment where that refusal is not in the best interest of the young person, e.g. blood transfusion for a reversible condition.

Resource: [Royal Children's Hospital 'Thinking Ahead' for children with life-limiting conditions](#)