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Law

Divorce and the Special Needs Child: A Guide For Parents
Margaret "Pegi" Price
Katelyn Bartleson, marketer
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Margaret “Pegi” Price’s *Divorce and the Special Needs Child* is an essential guide to what are still basically uncharted legal waters; it should be required reading for divorcing parents of disabled or special needs children, their legal team, and any counselors and care providers associated with the family.

Price is a family lawyer who specializes in divorces involving special needs children; as the mother of an autistic son who was six years old and functionally non-verbal at the time of her own divorce, she has personally experienced the difficulties with which parents, and the legal system, must contend in such situations.

“Families who have a child with a disability face serious issues every day that other people don’t even contemplate,” she writes. The US court system is based on tradition—a tradition that neither includes provisions for the disabled children of divorcing parents, nor considers the very real present and future needs of the child’s primary caregiver. As a result, demanding that these needs be considered means asking the courts to go against tradition, which is never an easy task.

Families seeking to guarantee the best possible outcome for their child and to protect the primary caregiver from future poverty will have to prepare and present extensive documentation, and Price has gone to great lengths to equip parents with the necessary knowledge and resources as they and their lawyers navigate this emerging field of law.

“If you educate your divorce lawyer on your child’s unique situation and on workable options to be incorporated into your documents, and that information is properly presented to the court, it is possible to achieve a much better result for your child and for your family,” wrote Price. “Special needs and disabled children are some of the most vulnerable people in our society. We owe them a higher duty of care.”

Her compassionate, wise, and practical book is filled with information that leaves no

aspect of the divorce process uncovered, and offers a glimpse at what one's life, post-divorce, might look like. Checklists, samples of legal documents, an ample bibliography, a chapter listing national and state resources, and a glossary of often-used legal and medical terms complete this highly valuable guidebook.

Margaret "Pegi" Price, JD, is past chair of the Family Law Section of the Bar Association of Metropolitan St. Louis, and a member of the Association of Family and Conciliation Courts and the National Council on Family Relations. She is also the author of *The Special Needs Child and Divorce*, published by the American Bar Association.

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