

## Do Your Homework



When dealing with social services, governmental agencies or community organizations get as much information as possible. Find out:

- What does this agency provide?
  - How does this agency work?
  - How do I apply for services?
  - Who is in charge of what I need to know or to get?
  - What information and documents do I need to have ready when I call or go in for an appointment?
- ✓ Ask for a "flow chart" brochure, handout or flyer. These are more or less a diagram that helps explain how the agency and its departments work, who is supposed to do what, and who you should go to if you're not getting satisfaction.
- ✓ Get it in writing! If someone won't give it to you in writing, ask to speak to a supervisor.
- ✓ Telephone book listing can be confusing, especially the "government" pages. See if you can get a list of important phone numbers from a local agency that is helping you, the Better Living for Seniors Coalition, which publishes an annual directory of many of the senior helping agencies in the county, or the Eldercare Locator Directory, which is a small book distributed throughout the county in brochure racks at businesses. Phone 2-1-1 and inquire about phone numbers for helping services, phone the Area Aging Elder Helpline or phone the Careline of Polk Family Caregivers, 863 603-9110.
- ✓ Keep important papers in a folder. You can write important information on the cover of each folder such as Social Security number, date of birth, address, phone number, policy numbers, etc.)