

Working with Your Child's Health Care Team: PREPARING FOR A CLINIC VISIT



As your child's most consistent caregiver, you know their needs in ways that no one else does. You having an active role as an equal member of your child's health care team is essential.

Maintaining collaborative relationships with your child's health care team will help your child receive the best care. Start with clear communication between you and providers. Be sure to share your cultural preferences so that they do not become barriers to access and service.

SEARCH FOR
PROVIDERS
AND CLINICS
THAT MEET
YOUR NEEDS

Primary Care Providers have an important role in your child's care:

- A Primary Care Provider can partner with you to oversee all of your child's care. They provide well care (yearly physicals for example), referrals to specialists, and coordination of care and services.
- Look for providers in your insurance network that meet your family and child's needs. Ask other families for recommendations. Find out about a doctor's experience and knowledge by checking clinic, or hospital websites where they often share their background, skills, and interests.
- Ask if your provider has a Care Coordinator that can help coordinate your child's care, such as communicating with specialists if needed, and connecting you with other needed services.
- You can ask for an appointment to interview a provider to decide if they and the clinic are a good fit.
- If a provider isn't a good fit for you, it's okay to change providers and find someone who you feel more comfortable working with.

SEEK
INFORMATION

- Bring a written list of questions. Keep in mind that the provider may not have time to answer all your questions at one visit, but you can leave your list and ask for a way to follow up to get the rest of your questions answered at another time.
- There are many sources of information about diagnoses, medicines, and treatments. Your child's providers may be the best resource for written materials or websites that might be helpful. There may be national and local organizations focused on your child's diagnosis.
- Talk with other parents: contact **Family Voices of MN, home to MN's Parent to Parent program: 612-440-1609 or connected@familyvoicesmn.org**

**TRUST
YOUR
INSTINCTS**

- Your instincts and knowledge of your child are critical to their medical care. Share what you know and what you observe with health care providers. Call when you see a problem. Providers rely on the firsthand information you give.
- It's good to ask questions about how your child is doing, how a medicine is working, or what to expect during a treatment.
- Call your child's doctor or clinic nurse before or between appointments if you have specific concerns. Some clinics offer an online portal for messaging.

**TELL THE
PROVIDER
ABOUT
YOUR CHILD
AND FAMILY'S
NEEDS**

- Talk with your child's provider about scheduling appointments that are long enough to discuss all your child's needs and develop a plan of care.
- If your child gets sick easily, ask to wait for your appointment in a separate area or if you and your child can wait in an exam room.
- Keep a dated log or journal in a notebook, computer, or phone about ongoing areas of care and anything new that you notice. A log will help you clearly explain your observations, when the issues have occurred, and the details about the issues.

**BRING A FAMILY
MEMBER OR
TRUSTED
FRIEND TO
APPOINTMENTS**

- Try to have the child's other parent, a family member, or trusted friend participate in key appointments. Before the appointment, talk together about your understanding of the purpose of the visit and questions you have.
- You may want to ask the other person to take notes. Two people will likely remember different information from the appointment, and you can talk over what you heard after the appointment.

**PREPARE YOUR
CHILD FOR THE
VISIT**

- It can be helpful to tell your child what to expect, who you will be seeing, and why. How and when you do this should be based on your child's age and development.
- If your child is able: encourage the child to think of questions to ask the doctor while at the visit. Encouraging your child to be an active member of the team early on will help him/her learn skills to become a self-advocate.