

## **Medical Home for Families**

### **What is a Medical Home?**

Medical home is not a house, it is a term. It means there is a “home base” for your child's health care needs. It can be the main place you take your child for health care. But medical home is more than just a place; it is how your child is cared for.

### **What are the benefits?**

A medical home:

- Focuses on the whole child and not just one certain part or problem.
- Puts your family at the center of the care. The family is involved in making decisions about your child’s health.
- Opens up sharing of information between your doctor and family. This improves how problems are solved and leads to better health and development outcomes for your child.
- Builds mutual respect between your family and caregivers.
- Catches problems early on and may:
  - Reduce visits to the emergency room and hospital.
  - Lower family stress and health care costs.
  - Reduce the number of days of missed school or work.

### **How do I know if my child has a medical home?**

Medical homes are a way of thinking about health care. Medical homes do not happen right away; they take time to develop. They don’t all look the same.

You, the parent or primary care giver, can help create a medical home for your child. Use the checklist below to see what you have now. Then you and your family, along with your child’s care team, can start to build a strong medical home for your child.

### **Medical home checklist:**

- You are valued and treated as the expert for your child.
- You are treated as a central member of your child’s health care team.
- You and your child’s doctor share respect and trust.
- Your culture and religious beliefs are valued.

## Checklist (continued)

- Your preferences for treatment and care are met when possible.
- Your child's doctor provides helpful information to other people on the care team and helps manage your child's care.
- You get help finding specialty care or community services when needed.
- If your child gets sick or has a special health care need, you feel supported.
- You are given information to help you learn about your child's ongoing health concerns. This includes information about parent to parent support.

## What can I do to get the best care for my child?

As a parent or guardian, you have a main role in developing your child's medical home. The ideas from other families are listed below. They may be helpful to you.

- Bring a written list of your top questions or concerns to discuss at every visit.
- If you know you will need extra time for your visit, tell the clinic when you call.
- Make a notebook or folder that holds your child's health information. Include names of doctors, other care givers and medicines etc. You can find sample forms at:
- Share with the doctor how your child is changing. Celebrate new skills and talk about concerns.
- You should feel comfortable asking questions about anything that has to do with your child's health and development. It is okay to respectfully disagree.
- It's okay to ask for something to be explained again if you don't understand it. Ask if you can record the conversation, if it will be helpful.
- Ask your doctor or nurse to write down what you should do or expect next.
- Ask about how to get care after hours if needed.
- Ask to meet the office staff who will be working with you and your child. This includes nurses, person who makes referrals, billing person, etc.
- It always feels good to get a thank you. If your medical home partners do something you are thankful for, let them know.



**ALERT:** Call your child's doctor, nurse, or clinic if you have any concerns or if your child has special health care needs not covered by this information.

**This teaching sheet is meant to help you care for your child. It does not take the place of medical care. Talk with your healthcare provider for diagnosis, treatment, and follow-up.**