

M is for **MEDICAL HOME**

Developing a Medical Home

A medical home is an approach to pediatric care that involves ongoing collaboration and trusting partnerships among the family and a child's health care providers. This approach provides continuous care to address a child's medical needs. A child's medical home is usually centered in a pediatrician's office. It is made up of a team that includes the child and family, primary care physicians, office staff, specialists, and public health service professionals. When using this team approach, primary care is accessible, comprehensive, and compassionate for all children.

Strategies for Developing a Medical Home

Here are four strategies for ongoing collaboration and trusting partnerships within a medical home.

Strategy 1. Form a family-led partnership.

- Develop a trusting partnership between a child's family and health care providers who respect the family's culture and diversity (e.g., share details about the child's health, strengths, and needs).
- Establish communication methods preferred by the family (e.g., online, in person, print).
- Prioritize the family's schedule and individual needs to coordinate care. For example, consider family's work schedule or additional supports that might be needed to attend appointments (e.g., transportation or coordination across multiple care systems for children with special health care needs).

Strategy 2. Implement coordinated care services.

- Work together as a team to implement a personalized care plan with the family, physician, and other service providers.
- Listen to and respond to each member of the care team to ensure a comprehensive approach to medical care for the child.
- Connect parents and caregivers with each other to form a circle of support through sharing experiences and resources found within each family's medical home.

Strategy 3. Continue ongoing, collaborative care.

- Make sure each member of the team knows and understands the child's medical history, including medical events in between visits (e.g., an urgent care visit).
- Organize communication, collaboration, and transitions among pediatric providers or specialists with a focus on supporting the child and family while navigating medical systems of care.

Strategy 4. Ensure medical assessments are appropriate.

- Evaluate whether child, medical, and family-related services are developmentally appropriate and culturally responsive.
- Confirm that all recommended medical evaluations and services support the child's health, well-being, and development.
- Consider medical costs to the family and timeliness of care (e.g., increasing weekly services may reduce dependence on medications).

What We Are Doing

The Anita Zucker Center and our collaborators work to advance practices that support coordinated care for all children.