

# The Medical Home Principle

*A family-centered, coordinated care approach for your child or young adult with special health care needs or disabilities*

## What is a medical home?

A medical home is not a building, but a better, family-centered way to provide care for children with special health care needs or disabilities. Through a medical home, a doctor and his or her staff coordinate care to make sure your child receives all necessary health services.

## Why is a medical home important?

As a parent of a child with disabilities or chronic health conditions, you know that it can be difficult to coordinate information and efforts among doctors, nurses and other health, education, insurance and social service professionals. Your child and your family can benefit from a medical home's family-centered, team approach to providing care.

## How does a medical home work?

In a medical home, information and concerns are shared by everyone caring for your child. Needs are addressed in a collaborative way, with a primary care doctor serving as the coordinator of your medical home team. A written care plan is shared with your family and all your child's health care providers.

To build a medical home, first choose a physician you trust to coordinate your child's medical home team. This physician will help you:

- Coordinate care for your child
- Develop care plans with other providers
- Communicate with other professionals
- Exchange information
- Share decision-making responsibilities
- Promote health and quality of life for your child and family

A medical home means that:

The primary care physician and other health care providers:	You and your child:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Know your child's health history</li><li>• Listen to your and your child's concerns and needs</li><li>• Work in partnership with your family to ensure that your child's needs and those of your family are met</li><li>• Create a trusting, collaborative relationship with your family</li><li>• Treat your child with compassion and understanding</li><li>• Help you develop a care plan for your child when needed</li><li>• Share impartial and complete information on an ongoing basis</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Share concerns and questions with your child's primary care physician and other health care providers</li><li>• Routinely communicate your child's needs and family priorities to the primary care physician, who promotes communication among your family and other health care providers</li><li>• Feel comfortable asking for information to be explained differently if you don't understand</li></ul>

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## Benefits of a medical home

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- More organized care
- More efficient communication
- Support from a team of caregivers
- Reduction of unnecessary duplicate services and tests
- Improved health care for your child

## The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) believes that all children should have medical care that is:

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- *Accessible:* Care is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week in your child's community.
- *Family-centered:* The doctor recognizes that your family is the principal caregiver and the center of strength and support for your child.
- *Continuous:* Your child will have the same primary pediatric health care professionals available from infancy through adolescence.
- *Comprehensive:* A medical home includes sick and well care, along with education and community referral needs.
- *Coordinated:* Your family is linked to support, educational, and community-based services.
- *Compassionate:* Concern for the well-being of your child and family is expressed and demonstrated.
- *Culturally effective:* Your family's cultural background is recognized, valued and respected.

## How do I build a medical home?

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- Share this handout with your child's primary care doctor
- Talk with the doctor and other providers about how to coordinate your child's care by setting up a medical home approach
- Learn more by contacting PACER's Family-to-Family Health Information Center at (952) 838-9000

## Resources for more information:

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Minnesota Children with Special Health Needs: Minnesota Medical Home

[www.health.state.mn.us/divs/fh/mcshn/medhm](http://www.health.state.mn.us/divs/fh/mcshn/medhm)

National Center of Medical Home Implementation

[www.medicalhomeinfo.org](http://www.medicalhomeinfo.org)

Center for Medical Home Improvement

[www.medicalhomeimprovement.org](http://www.medicalhomeimprovement.org)