The Medical Home (Health Care 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 (health care home)?
A medical home, also known as a health care 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 of 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/ 
  other health care providers: | You and your child: |
|-----------------------------|------------------|
| Know your child's health 
  history                     | Share concerns 
  and questions with your 
  child's primary care 
  physician and other 
  health care providers      |
| Listen to your and your child's 
  concerns and needs          | 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                    |
| Work in partnership with your 
  family to ensure that your 
  child's needs and those of your 
  family are met                | Feel comfortable asking for 
  information to be explained 
  differently if you don't 
  understand                    |
| Create a trusting, collaborative 
  relationship with your family |                  |
| Treat your child with 
  compassion and understanding  |                  |
| Help you develop a care plan 
  for your child when needed    |                  |
| Share impartial and complete 
  information on an ongoing 
  basis                        |                  |

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Benefits of a medical home

- 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:

- **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 does a clinic become a medical home?

- There is a statewide certification process for a clinic to become a certified medical home. To learn more about this process, visit: [health.state.mn.us/healthreform/homes/certification/index.html](http://health.state.mn.us/healthreform/homes/certification/index.html)
- This includes hiring a care coordinator among other measures to receive certification.
- There is also a recertification process that involves performance measures and evaluation of health care homes. For more information, visit: [health.state.mn.us/healthreform/homes/outcomes/index.html](http://health.state.mn.us/healthreform/homes/outcomes/index.html)

How do I know if my clinic is a certified medical home?

You can visit the Department of Health website to find if your clinic is a medical home/health care home at: [https://apps.health.state.mn.us/hchcertification/publicReports/publicCertifyClinicianList.seam](https://apps.health.state.mn.us/hchcertification/publicReports/publicCertifyClinicianList.seam)

How do I build a medical home?

- 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 Health Information Center at (952) 838-9000.

Resources for more information:

- American Academy of Pediatrics
  [medicalhomeinfo.aap.org/pages/default.aspx](http://medicalhomeinfo.aap.org/pages/default.aspx)
- Medical Home for Children and Youth with Special Health Needs
  [health.state.mn.us/divs/cfh/topic/medhome](http://health.state.mn.us/divs/cfh/topic/medhome)
- Center for Medical Home Improvement
  [medicalhomeimprovement.org](http://medicalhomeimprovement.org)