

TEAMING WITH OTHERS

Managing the hospital and clinic environment

The **Team** Concept:

Why a team? Well, very simply put: raising a child is important, rewarding and hard work. Parents, especially of children with special health care needs, **need PARTNERS: a team**. The team that you create may actually meet you at appointments, they could include:

- family, friends and neighbors who care about you and your child
- doctors, nurses, dentists, psychologist, therapists and other care workers
- teachers, child care providers and organizations that you are involved with that offer helpful information and support
- people you feel good talking with *about* your child
- and, don't forget, children themselves!!!

Here are some considerations you might make regarding your child's health care team:

- Build trust over time; it is fundamental
- Talk openly, respectfully and constructively. Consider what parts of your life/your child's life you want to keep private.
- Respect the knowledge, skills, experience and qualities each of these team members brings to the care of your child.
- Enlist them! Tell them how important they are to your child's health and well-being. Let them know what you hope and need.
- Make sure your goals and values are known. Your background, culture and interest are IMPORTANT.
- Do your best to work out differences and problems. Expect some ups and down in life and in relationships. Get help if needed to settle issues.
- When things are going well, CHEER! Let others on your team know the good news.
- Develop good working relationships with everybody who is a key in your child's life.
- Commit yourself to work for excellent outcomes for your children
- Be there as a partner for others—for all children! Others may need you on their team.*

**adapted from: "Bright Futures: Family Matters" Winter, 2004*

CARE COORDINATION

Many parents wonder: who is the person that everyone keeps referring to as “*THE CARE COORDINATOR*”, OR, *THE PERSON FROM THE* Continuity of Care Program”? What will/can this person do to help me and my child? These are GREAT QUESTIONS!!!

At the University of Iowa Children’s Hospital we have Care Coordinators working to help you and your child during your stay with us: either inpatient or outpatient.

Your Care Coordinator while inpatient may help in the following ways:

1. Be your patient/family advocate: work out problems amongst different services if they should occur. Get to know you and your child and what your needs are. Answer your questions: helping you to understand your child’s diagnosis and plan of care.
2. Help to provide a smooth flow of service when your child is transferred from one service or patient care area to another.
3. Plan for or coordinate care conferences (these are meetings that help make sure that information, concerns and ultimately goals are being clearly communicated amongst all members of the health care team.)
4. Plans for and coordinates care in your local community before discharge of your child from the hospital. Arranges for the equipment you will need to have available when you get home.
5. Explains to you what the different Waiver and various Medical Assistance Programs are in the state of Iowa. Assists you with the application process for whatever Waiver or Program your child may qualify for. Refers you to other people who can help you through the process of the various Waiver and Medical Assistance Programs as needed.
6. Refers you to and/or communicates with your child’s local Area Education Association, Early ACCESS Program, local physicians, community health (Nursing) agencies as well as your child’s school.
7. Assists you in finding your way through University of Iowa Children’s Hospital and helps to meet any need that you might have when you and your child are here.

Your Care Coordinator while outpatient can help in the following ways:

1. Be your patient/family advocate: assist you to negotiate (problem solve) amongst the different services that you may encounter, assist you in asking the questions that you need to ask.
2. Provide your child with a smooth flow of service from clinic to clinic and clinic to home. Develops an understanding of what your child's needs are and what referrals may help you and your child the most.
3. Provides a referral to Early ACCESS, and other programs as needed.
4. Communicates with your local physician, home health care agencies or other members of your child's health care team (therapists, psychologist, and family members).
5. Helps you to understand your child's diagnosis and plan of care before you leave the clinic.
6. Make sure that you will have what you need to take care of your child when you get home. (Equipment, medications, etc.)
7. Assists you in applying for the appropriate Waiver and or other medical assistance programs for your child. Can help you to fill out various applications for various programs.
8. Review follow up appointments to make sure the appropriate specialists are scheduled to see your child.
9. Work with clinic schedulers to coordinate appointments whenever possible.
10. After your clinic appointment, we will follow up with you by phone to make sure that everything is going ok and help you if things are not going ok. Will make additional referrals based on need after you are home.

