

Tips for Parents: Talking with Medical Personnel

1. Ask doctors, nurses, and others any questions you have about your child's health and care. Also ask them for clarification if you don't understand their jargon. Don't be intimidated – they are there to help you!
2. If you want to ask sensitive questions and your child or other people are present, ask to speak to medical personnel in private if it would make you feel more comfortable.
3. Keep in mind your right to ask questions. If you have many complex questions, however, you may wish to arrange a separate appointment when more time will be available to discuss them in detail.
4. Bring up – and ask the professional to bring up – any positive progress your child has made. This can be helpful to you and your child. Medical conversations are often oriented towards problems. Sometimes progress and development tend not to be emphasized.
5. Ask, if you don't know, what the next logical areas for change and progress might be.
6. Find someone involved with your child's care whom you respect and can talk to; knowledge as well as personality is important.
7. Consider asking all of your child's specialists to meet together with you at some point to discuss progress, future goals, and plans.
8. Search for information:
 - Read anything you can find on the topic
 - Write to anyone who has information
 - Ask those who work with your child if they know of any relevant articles that could help you understand your child's disability
9. Between visits, make a list of questions that occur to you; sometimes they are hard to remember later.
10. Make a list of any questions your child may have. This is one good way to reinforce your child's role in his or her own care.