









## COMMUNICATING WITH YOUR CARE PROVIDER

In our daily lives, it is sometimes hard to share our ideas, questions, concerns or feelings. In the rush of a doctor's visit, with your child (or children) there, a waiting room full of patients or other distractions, it can be difficult to ask questions or express your thoughts and concerns. It may seem much easier to wait until the next visit.

Patients have suggested a variety of strategies that have helped them communicate more effectively with their doctors (or nurses, therapists, or other medical providers). By using some of the ideas below, you may be able to help your care provider understand a concern that you have about your child.

-  Bring reinforcements. If possible, bring your spouse or a friend to the visit. If necessary, the friend can take your child out of the room so that you can talk to the doctor privately and without distractions. Another adult can help you remember what the doctor said.
-  Prepare questions or concerns before the visit. Do this preferably in the form of a written list. Go over the list with the doctor, or ask the most important questions first and ask the doctor to respond to the other later.
-  Prepare the doctor. Since doctors often have busy schedules, it may be useful to call before the visit and let them know that you have a number of questions and need an extended visit. In some cases, you might want to share these questions before the scheduled appointment.
-  Recognize the positive. Let doctors know what you like or appreciate about their attention to you and your child's medical care. Celebrate successes. Share pictures of your child and her accomplishments. Keep the doctor informed of new skills your child achieves.
-  Share your view of the situation. If you have personal, cultural or religious beliefs that will affect how you carry out the doctor's suggestions for your child's medical care let the doctor know.
-  Take notes. Review them with the doctor to make sure that you both understand.
-  If you also see specialists, make certain that your child's primary care provider is sent copies of all reports in order to stay aware of all new developments. Use the "Authorization for Release of Medical Records" in this section to assist you in this process.
-  During the appointment, ask for copies of your child's reports so that you can update your home files.