

Choosing a Parent Partner/Family Advocate for the Medical Home

1. All practice team members need to understand and embrace the idea of having a parent of a child with special health care needs (CSHCN) as equal partners.
2. Discuss the parental traits, qualities, and characteristics that would compliment the practice team.
3. Discuss potential parent partners and determine if they would be a good match for the practice team.

Ideas about selecting a parent partner/family advocate:

- Have a child with special health care needs
- Be able to look beyond their own issues and concerns to be able to address perspectives of other families with CSHCN
- Have accessed a wide variety of services and supports
- Have accessed many different providers (specialist, therapist)
- Has a knowledge of statewide and local family and disability organizations
- Ready to put energy into changing the health care system
- Have a strong desire to make a difference
- Can make a commitment to the time necessary for meetings, assignments and have some flexibility.
- Can work within a team environment
- Is a self-starter
- Can communicate effectively. Not feel intimidated and be able to voice their ideas and concerns comfortably

Look for a parent partner who values the input of every team member and enjoys working with a team where trust and respect are reciprocal. You want someone who can work at this level of partnership and also is an expert in family issues. This may take time.

Some Expectations:

- Assist with completing the Medical Home Index to assess “medical homeness” of the practice periodically
- Assist with completing the Medical Home Family Index to assess parents’ perceptions of the “medical homeness” of the practice initially and periodically
- Attend Learning Sessions with the Practice Team
- Meet regularly with the Practice Team (schedule determined by the Practice Team)
- Participate in monthly conference calls with the Project Team
- Assist in identifying and selecting office and care processes, related to caring for CSHCN, to be improved
- Provide input to the Practice Team on changes and decisions for the practice
- Communicate regularly with the Project Staff including the Utah Family Voices Director
- Participate in monthly calls with other Family Advocates and in a listserv to share knowledge with other practices regarding family advocacy and Medical Home issues
- Participate in a Family Advocacy Leadership Institute on April 28-29
- Participate in record keeping activities of family advocates to send in to the Utah Family Voices Director for monthly stipends