

Preparing for a Medical Appointment: Tips for Engaging with Your Provider

Building a trusting relationship with your health care provider is important to make sure your family receives the care you need and deserve. You and your child can use the tips below before, during, and after a visit with your provider to help make sure you receive the best possible care.



BEFORE THE VISIT

- **Spend time preparing for the visit** to make sure that you and your child feel confident before arriving.
 - Write down questions before a visit that you and your child may want to ask the provider.
 - Talk through the reason and goals for the appointment with your child before the visit.
- **Invite another person to come along** and be a “second set of ears.” This person can remind you of things you want to bring up during the visit and take notes during the visit.
- **Take a deep breath to get focused** when the provider comes in, and stay calm and focused on your goals for the visit.

DURING THE VISIT

- **Ask providers for what you want and need**, and do not be ashamed to share big needs like housing, food, and jobs. These areas affect your child’s health, and your child’s provider may be able to connect you to supports in your community. Encourage your child to express their needs to the provider.
- **Be sure your provider knows what is important to you**, like preferred language, health goals for your child, medications your child uses or needs, and any other parts of your child’s life where you need some extra support.
- **Talk in a way that is comfortable for you and your child.** Ask questions and slow the conversation down when you need to. Ask your provider to explain things. There is no such thing as a bad question.
- **Share where your child finds joy** to help providers see your child as an individual. This can help your child and the provider to build a relationship.

AFTER THE VISIT

- **If your trust has been broken**, think about whether it makes sense to work to repair the relationship or find a new provider.
- **Share information about health care visits with a trusted person** after the visit to help you think through any new plans for care and brainstorm what other questions you can ask between visits.
- **If you have access, look over the electronic health record notes** to be sure they match what you heard and understood during the visit. If you have questions about the visit notes, reach out to your provider. If you have questions about how to see and use your electronic medical record, visit: www.wherismymedicalrecord.org and talk to your provider.