

Definition of Family-Centered Care

Family-Centered Care assures the health and well-being of children and their families through a respectful family-professional partnership. It honors the strengths, cultures, traditions and expertise that everyone brings to this relationship. Family-Centered Care is the standard of practice which results in high quality services.



Principles of Family-Centered Care for Children

The foundation of family-centered care is the partnership between families and professionals.

Key to this partnership is the following principles:

- Families and professionals work together in the best interest of the child and the family. As the child grows, s/he assumes a partnership role.
- Everyone respects the skills and expertise brought to the relationship.
- Trust is acknowledged as fundamental.
- Communication and information sharing are open and objective.
- Participants make decisions together.
- There is a willingness to negotiate.

Based on this partnership, family-centered care:

1. Acknowledges the family as the constant in a child's life.
2. Builds on family strengths.
3. Supports the child in learning about and participating in his/her care and decision-making.
4. Honors cultural diversity and family traditions.
5. Recognizes the importance of community-based services.
6. Promotes an individual and developmental approach.
7. Encourages family-to-family and peer support.
8. Supports youth as they transition to adulthood.
9. Develops policies, practices, and systems that are family-friendly and family-centered in all settings.
10. Celebrates successes.

Sources: National Center for Family-Centered Care. *Family-Centered Care for Children with Special Health Care Needs*. (1989). Bethesda, MD: Association for the Care of Children's Health.

Bishop, Woll and Arango (1993). *Family/Professional Collaboration for Children with Special Health Care Needs and their Families*. Burlington, VT: University of Vermont, Department of Social Work.

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