

Video Transcript: How can providers engage families to improve a medical home?

Created by the National Center for Medical Home Implementation, a cooperative agreement between the American Academy of Pediatrics and the Maternal and Child Health Bureau, Health Resources and Services Administration.

Blue background with title: How can providers engage families to improve a practice's performance as a medical home?

Eileen Forlenza, BS National Consultant- Patient-and Family-Centered Care is interviewed.

EILEEN FORLENZA: The way providers can work better with families is first of all to establish a relationship and help families understand the difference between health and health care. Because health care is that interaction between the provider in a clinical setting, but health is where things happen at home—and are they having the right kind of nutrition and exercise, and activity and good decision making in terms of health interventions.

So I think the way providers can really engage families is to start that relationship of understanding what is it about their family that makes them unique. Also what families and how families feel engaged is when they're simply asked questions as a partner, and when we can look at families as being equal contributors to the health outcomes of their kids it changes the whole ball game.

So engaging families by asking questions: what are the strengths of their family? And one of the most critical decisions or one of the most critical questions I think providers can ask families: how do you make decisions about health care in your family? That's a very culturally responsive question to ask a family and that will help them be engaged.

And what we learn from families when we ask that question is: before we make any decision, we talk to the grandmother in our family, we take this to our elders and they help us make decisions. Some families will report that decisions are made by the male figure in the house, or sometimes it's clearly a maternal kind of decision. But just opening that question and asking: what's the culture of your family when it comes to making decisions? It's huge, and that will lead to true and authentic engagement and partnerships with families.

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