



CONVERSATIONS IN CARE

Quick Guides for CHWs and Care Teams

Practical Tools Rooted in Trust and Respect

Choosing a Primary Care Provider

Why it matters:

Welcoming a new baby brings many decisions, including choosing a primary care doctor (sometimes called a *medical home*). A medical home is the place where your baby receives ongoing, coordinated care for health, growth, and development.

Families who have a medical home for their baby often experience fewer missed appointments, better health outcomes, and easier access to resources.

This guide aims to support providers in delivering information with compassion, creating a safe and respectful environment, and connecting families to the resources and support they need as they begin navigating their journey.

Before the conversation:

- Create a safe, respectful environment.
- Ask about what the family already knows or believes.
- Acknowledge that different words, beliefs, or traditions may be different, and that it is okay.
- At first, listen more than speak.

Questions Parents Might Ask About Choosing a Primary Care Doctor

What is a medical home?

A medical home is a primary care doctor's office where your baby receives regular checkups, preventive care, and treatment when they are sick. The medical home coordinates care with specialists, hospitals, and community resources so your baby's health is managed in one place.



Tip: Explain that the medical home is not just a doctor's office, it's a partnership for the baby's overall health. Emphasize continuity: having one primary care team helps track growth, development, and vaccinations.

When should I choose a primary care doctor?

Ideally, families should choose a doctor before the baby is discharged from the hospital. However, to ensure continuity of care and avoid last-minute stress, families can work on identifying a primary care provider during pregnancy, before the baby arrives.



Tip: Encourage families to start early. Offer help with hospital paperwork or finding providers if they need guidance.

What should I consider when choosing a doctor?

Families may consider:

- **Location:** Close to home, work, or daycare.
- **Office hours and accessibility:** Evening or weekend hours, language support, and ease of scheduling.
- **Communication style:** Doctors and staff who listen, explain clearly, and respect cultural beliefs.
- **Experience with babies:** Pediatricians, family doctors, or nurse practitioners trained in newborn and infant care.



Tip: Encourage families to list their priorities and ask questions during office visits. Remind families that it's okay to visit more than one office before making a choice.

How can I know if a doctor is a good fit for my family?

Families may consider:

- **Comfort level:** Does the doctor answer questions patiently and explain things clearly?
- **Responsiveness:** Is it easy to get advice or schedule appointments when needed?
- **Support for developmental milestones:** Does the office provide guidance on growth, behavior, and screenings?



Tip: Suggest families bring a list of questions to their first visit. Encourage open discussion about cultural or language needs.

What if my family has special needs or concerns?

A good medical home can:

- Coordinate care with specialists (e.g., cardiology, developmental pediatrics, nutrition).
- Connect families to community resources, early intervention, or support programs.



Tip: Help families identify resources and make appointments. Remind families that asking for support is a normal part of managing their baby's health.

How do we get started after choosing a medical home?

Families should:

- Schedule the first checkup soon after hospital discharge.
- Keep a record of vaccinations, screenings, and any concerns.
- Build a relationship with the staff and ask questions at every visit.



Tip: Offer to help families track appointments and follow-up care. Encourage consistent communication with the medical home.