

## TOP TEN TIPS FOR FAMILY ADVOCATES

1. Speak up! Don't hesitate to ask questions or share concerns and observations.
2. Don't forget to take care of yourself! Taking a nap, going for a walk, talking to a friend, or going for something to eat can help you to recharge and stay focused on advocating for your child.
3. Have confidence in the fact that you are the expert about your child.
4. Learn as much as possible about your child's condition or diagnosis.
5. Acknowledge the stress, sadness, and fear that often go along with having a hospitalized child. Your feelings are important.
6. Ask for help if you need it. Talk with your nurse or social worker about resources that might assist your family.
7. Remember that every member of your medical team has the best interest of your child at heart.
8. Discuss concerns as soon as they arise.
9. If a conflict occurs, try to resolve it calmly, remembering that everyone deserves to be treated with respect.
10. Ask your nurse about setting up a family meeting to help keep the lines of communication open between your care team members.



## Family Advisory Council

*Working together for you.*

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[PennStateHershey.org/childrens](http://PennStateHershey.org/childrens)



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# Family Advocacy



Good People. Great Medicine.™

# Why is Family Advocacy important?



If there was a trivia game about your child, you would win!

You know your child better than anyone, and in the family-centered care culture of Penn State Hershey Children's Hospital, you are a vital member of your child's care team. Your knowledge and observations can provide valuable information to the rest of the team. You are uniquely able to speak in your child's best interest, and to be their voice when they may not be able to speak for themselves.

## PATIENT- AND FAMILY-CENTERED CARE

At Penn State Milton S. Hershey Medical Center, we strive to provide patient- and family-centered care. This means we want to partner with our patients and families to provide the best possible care. We value your input and encourage you to participate in the care and decision-making process at the level you choose. We are committed to listening to, and honoring, your family perspectives and choices. We try to incorporate your family's knowledge, values, beliefs, and cultural background into the planning and delivery of care. We encourage you to ask questions and to share concerns with your care team.

## THE CARE TEAM

Whether your child is inpatient at the hospital, or visiting one of our off-campus locations on an outpatient basis, there will be many people participating in his or her care. An attending physician is your child's primary doctor, and is responsible for making the final recommendations about your child's plan of care. While an inpatient, a resident doctor examines your child daily and reports to the attending physician. A registered nurse closely monitors your child's progress and communicates any changes to the doctors. Your care team may also include a nurse practitioner, physician assistant, certified nursing assistant, supervised medical and nursing students, and other members based on the specific needs of your child.

## TAKING AN ACTIVE ROLE

We encourage you to be an active participant in your child's care. Participating in rounds and bedside shift reports gives you an opportunity to ask questions and share important information about your child. Talk with your child's doctors and nurses about the level of involvement you would like to have during the hospital stay. Think about whether you would like to remain with your child during various treatments and procedures, and discuss your wishes with the rest of the care team.

## DIFFICULT CIRCUMSTANCES

In spite of everyone's best efforts, communication breakdowns do sometimes occur. If you are faced with a conflict regarding an aspect of your child's care or treatment, it is absolutely acceptable and encouraged for you to voice your questions and concerns. Try to remain calmly focused on your role as your child's advocate, and remember that everyone is a part of the same team, working towards a common goal.

## QUESTIONS OR CONCERNS

Any member of your child's care team is happy to answer your questions. There may be times, however, that you would like additional information, or feel that a concern is not being addressed. In these situations, you can speak first with your nurse, and then to the charge nurse or the nurse manager if needed. Likewise, if you've already spoken with the resident doctor, you may choose to speak to a senior resident, fellow, or your child's attending physician. You can always ask your child's bedside nurse to page his or her attending physician, if you wish to speak directly to him or her.

If you still feel that a concern has not been resolved, you can call patient relations at 717-531-6311, and someone will be happy to assist you.

