



Tips for Parents: Being Involved in your child's Health Care

1 | Give names, phone numbers and addresses for ALL of your child's health care providers.

This will help your protective services worker, foster care worker and foster parents get the best health care services for your child.

Your child should keep going to their own doctor, dentist, therapist, etc., because that person knows the most about your child. Sometimes your child will have to go to a new doctor; for instance, if your child's foster home is too far away. If a new doctor will be taking care of your child, it is even more important for the new doctor to get your child's health history from prior providers.

2 | Check with your foster care worker to see if you can go to your child's health appointments.

Your foster care worker might have to supervise parenting time at the beginning of the case. Let the worker know you want to go to health appointments if allowed. Ask if some of your parenting time can happen at health appointments.



3 | If you are allowed, go to as many of your child's appointments as possible.

Being at your child's appointments is a great way to make sure that health providers know as much about your child as possible. It also helps you to keep up with any changes in your child's health.

If you aren't allowed to attend appointments, you can still give information about your child by writing it down and asking your foster care worker to give it to the health provider, or by calling the provider's office.

If you can't attend an appointment because of a conflict, ask for a copy of the after visit summary. Most offices provide these short summaries after every appointment.

The foster care worker should give you a summary of your child's health care, which is called the "Medical Passport," every three months during your child's time in foster care. You will need to sign the Medical Passport to show you received it.



4 | Keep track of appointment days and times.

Ask the Foster Care Worker if you can get a reminder call or text from the doctor's office when the foster parent gets a reminder.

5 | Ask for help with transportation if you need it to get to your child's health appointments.

Your foster care worker can help you.

6 | Know about the different kinds of appointments your child might need.

- **Comprehensive health examinations** – sometimes called “well child” exams, are complete checkups scheduled at regular times; like 6 months, 12 months, and 18 months. Your child will have a comprehensive health examination sometime during the first 30 days in foster care, just to make sure that he or she is healthy and doing well, and to catch any concerns as early as possible.
- **Dental examinations** – children 3 years and older need to have a dental examination within 90 days of coming into foster care if they haven't had an exam six months before entering foster care. Ongoing dental exams need to happen once a year, but your child's dentist might want exams more often.
- **Focused health examinations** – these happen when your child is ill; like when they have an ear infection or need follow-up appointments.
- **Specialty health appointments** – these occur when a child has an ongoing problem like diabetes or asthma and needs a specialist to work along with the regular doctor.
- **Mental Health appointments** – these might be with a counselor or therapist, or might be with a doctor to use medications to help with a mental health concern.

7 | Know WHO can consent for treatment for your child.

- **Your child's foster parent** can consent for routine care, like treatment for ear infections, asthma or diabetes, or dental procedures like cleaning or filling cavities. You should be told about your child's treatment even if your consent isn't required.
- **You** must consent for treatment for serious health problems, like something that would need an operation but isn't an emergency, unless the court appointed someone else to make these decisions.
- **Your child's foster parent** can consent for mental health assessment and counseling. You should know if this care is going on, and should be involved in your child's treatment. For example, some counseling might include you and your child, especially as you get closer to reunification.
- **You** must consent for mental health treatment with medications, unless the court appoints someone else to make these decisions.
- If your child is really ill or injured and needs care right away, doctors provide care and then talk with parents and caregivers about what happened after the emergency is over.



Remember!!

You are important to your child's health and well-being even if she or he is not living with you.

Staying involved in your child's health care will help you be more successful during the reunification process and after your child returns to your care.