

Making Good Family Choices

Professionals can be most helpful to families if their advice and suggestions are responsive to parents' concerns and priorities. To be sure professionals are responsive to your family's concerns and priorities, it is important that they really listen to and provide families complete and unbiased information in order for you to make informed choices. This practice guide includes things you can do to be sure interventions fit your child and family's particular situation.

[Watch a video of this guide](#)

Identifying Family Concerns and Priorities

- Your child and family's participation in early childhood intervention should address your concerns and priorities. Professionals, and the advice and suggestions they make, should be in response to your goals and preferences for your child, yourself, and your family.
- You should expect professionals to listen to and take the time to understand what would be most helpful to you and your family from your point-of-view. Professionals should take the time to be sure they understand your concerns and priorities before offering advice and suggestions.
- Parents and other family members at different times need information, advice, and other types of support and resources. Professionals have a lot of knowledge about the resources and supports that are available to young children and their families. You should expect professionals to make suggestions and provide advice about those resources and supports.
- You should expect to receive complete and unbiased information from professionals so that you can make informed choices and decisions. You will want to consider different options and the possible outcomes of different choices for you, your child, and your family before making a decision. Professionals who work with parents in a family-centered manner can help you decide which choices make most sense for your family.
- Professionals will not always agree with your choices and decisions, but they should always support and respect what you decide is best for your child and family. You should always feel supported, respected, and treated in a nonjudgmental way.
- You will likely have many questions about what might be best for your child and family. You should expect professionals to answer your questions so that you have the information you need to make good choices.
- Remember that decision-making is the first step in improving your child and family's life. Family-centered practitioners should work with you as a team to develop and carry out a plan to obtain the supports and resources that you want for your child, yourself, and your family.



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The two go through each one and identify both the strengths and weaknesses of each center. After narrowing the list down to the two best picks, the home visitor shares the fact that one of the two centers is operated by a nurse who has considerable experience with children with Zoe's medical condition. The mother decides to visit that center and eventually enrolls her daughter in that program after the director's explanation of the care Zoe would be provided.

A Quick Peek

Susan and Bill Adams are the parents of a 1-year old daughter, Zoe, who has a disability and medical condition that requires specialized health care. The parents decided because of their child's health care costs that Susan needs to return to work. She brings this up during the next home visit by the family's early childhood practitioner. The mother and home visitor discuss the kinds of childcare Zoe will need and the knowledge and skills childcare staff will need to have to take care of Zoe's health care needs. The home visitor and mother identify six childcare centers that meet most of the mother's requirements.

You'll know the practice is working when...

- You are provided information you need to make good choices
- You feel good about the support and resources that you have chosen
- You feel the practitioner is "on your side"

This practice guide is based upon the following *DEC Recommended Practices*: Family 1, 2, 3, 4, 7
 The DEC Recommended Practices are available at <http://dec-sped.org/recommendedpractices>

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