

Building Strong *Parent–Provider* Partnerships

Effective parent–provider partnerships bring together the unique expertise of families and professionals to support a child’s growth and development. When parents and providers collaborate, they are better able to identify strengths, address areas of need, and make informed decisions that benefit the child.

Parents are the experts on their child, family, culture, and community. Providers contribute professional training and experience in child development and health. Combining these perspectives strengthens relationships, promotes shared decision-making, and supports healthy development. Growth, healing, and recovery occur within trusting, respectful relationships.

Simply put, two perspectives are better than one!



When to *Seek Support*

Early identification and intervention improve outcomes. An evaluation may be appropriate if a child has:

Lost skills they previously acquired.

Not yet met expected developmental milestones.

Ongoing emotional or behavioral concerns that affect daily functioning.

When You First Learn About a Diagnosis or Concern

Learning about a child’s mental health or developmental concern can feel overwhelming. Helpful strategies include:

- Check in with yourself and acknowledge your feelings.
- Go slow, reflect, and normalize your emotions.
- Talk with trusted people who can offer emotional support.
- Work closely with your child’s primary care team to plan next steps and identify appropriate providers and services.
- Identify your goals for support and services.
- Gather information and ask clear, concise questions.
- Limit exposure to excessive or distressing media content.
- Avoid starting or ending the day with social media or news.
- Connect with parents who have lived experience for support and help navigating services.





Advocating for Your Child and Yourself

Advocating for your child can feel intimidating, but doing so builds strong parent-provider partnerships and ensures the best care.

Take these four steps to advocate for your child and yourself:

- Keep records and track progress to share key information with providers.
- Ask questions and clarify recommendations to understand next steps.
- Know your rights and resources to access needed support and services.
- Collaborate, seek support, and care for yourself while working with providers.

Trust Your Instincts

You know your child better than anyone!

Relationships are central to growth, with parents leading the way to ensure children thrive.



Find the right fit for you and your child

Providers can help you anticipate and navigate the evaluation and treatment process.



Knowledge is power

When parents understand their child's diagnosis and actively participate in treatment, they become full partners in their child's care.



For more resources, visit
mhamd.org/earlychildhood



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Healthy New Families is a program of the Mental Health Association of Maryland. We promote mental health and well-being for new parents, infants and young children, and families across Maryland by connecting families and providers with resources, education, and support.

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