

## Partnering With Private-Duty Nursing Agencies: Helpful Tips for Parents and Caregivers

- **Parents know their child best** and you are your child's best advocate, caregiver and cheerleader. Taking charge of the day-to-day care for a child with complex medical needs can be overwhelming, exhausting, and sometimes frightening. Having a trained pediatric home care nurse to help care for your child can provide a welcome breather for you. These tips may help you as you begin to work with your child's private duty nurse and nursing agency.
- **The best way to ensure that your child's new nursing team** is in sync with your child's needs and that you and your family acclimate well to this situation, is to convey your expectations, preferences, and concerns up front.
- **Schedule Nursing** once you know the approved nursing hours. Let the agency know the shifts you need coverage. (e.g. 8 hour shift, 12 hour shift and the timings, day time, evening, or overnight whatever will work for your child and family)
- **As you welcome nurses to your home you can share your preferences with them**
  - Let the nurse know where they may park their car
  - Show the nurse the area or room where he or she will care for your child
  - Provide a table, chair and ensure proper room lighting for them to work
  - Inform the nurse if he/she can use the appliances in your kitchen
  - Let the nurse know if they can adjust the heat or air conditioning settings, answer your home phone, as well as answer your doorbell
  - Please let the nursing agency know if you have pets at home, so they will take this into consideration when staffing your child's case to ensure that the nurses assigned are comfortable with animals.
  - Share any cultural preferences (e.g. remove outside shoes and bring appropriate shoes to wear while in your home; if you have any food restrictions that you don't want in your home).
- **Setting your child's room:** Nurses will be a great help in setting up your child's space/room. They will provide useful suggestions on arranging your child's equipment (e.g. where you can set the IV Pump, feeding pole, suction pump) and organizing the supplies in an effective and efficient manner.
- **Prepare a "Go Bag"** At first going to an appointment or just going outside requires much planning. Nurses will help you in preparing a "Go Bag" (Includes but not limited to Diapers, Feeding bag, Suction bag, Medicines, Emergency backups e.g. extra Tracheotomy and Gastrostomy supplies).
- **If you prefer, your nurse will help you by scheduling** your child's doctor's appointments, refilling medication and ordering DME supplies. Also, they will accompany you to your child's appointments.
- **Take one step at a time.** Don't be too hard on yourself. If things do not go as expected and you have a concern/conflict, you can have a discussion with your nurse and give feedback. If the situation continues, you can contact the nursing agency for assistance.
- **Having a nurse in your home,** is a change for you, your child and your family. By embracing this change, you can create a successful care team for your child with his/her nurses.

