



*Statewide Parent
Advocacy Network*

- Jeannette Mejias is a Bilingual Family Resource Specialist (FRS) providing support at one of NJ's Special Child Health Service Case Management Units and is the Bilingual Medical Home Coordinator supporting our Immigrant Outreach Initiative at three Federally Qualified Health Care Center. She is also a Parent to Parent coordinator focused on Latinos and underserved Immigrant families, and a Medical Home Parent Partner, providing pediatricians with direct support on best practices to establish meaningful partnerships and creating support groups for diverse immigrant families. As an FRS, she provides parents and professionals with best practices to ensure ongoing collaboration, communication, and engagement. She also helps identify and create awareness about state and community based resources to ensure that families of children with ASD and other special needs are accessing and connected to these vital supports. Jeannette is a proud parent of two incredible children diagnosed with ASD who are experiencing great success due to her direct involvement and advocacy efforts



BE the Compass

Lessons Learned From My Journey!

Problem

- Assumptions that parents understand normal developmental milestones
- Cultural Beliefs and Protocol dictate that you do not question the doctor
- Parental Concerns are dismissed and do not result in a prompt Developmental Screening or an immediate referral to Early Intervention .
- Most MH have limited knowledge of community resources . Informative Posters about Milestones and Developmental Delays are rarely displayed in medical offices.
- Not well versed about disabilities, common interventions and IDEA/504 so that you can help families in their advocacy efforts and secure appropriate supports

Solution

- Share written resources about healthy developmental milestones. Bright Futures Booklet
- Encourage parents to share their concerns before, during and after their MH visits . Talk about Culture.
- Physicians should respond to all concerns and conduct routine screenings and refer families to Early Intervention
- Create a resources corner and encourage families to post resources and community activities. Foster Parent Partner relationship(s) with Parents that call your practice a Medical Home.
- Physicians are an integral part of child' s intervention team and need to monitor progress . Important to share school reports.

We have Arrived

The Road Map Has Improved

- Doctors have and use better tools for Early Screening
- Parents are more informed about child development and have greater access to Medical Homes and Community Health Centers
- Collaboration & Communication by Physicians, Parents and Specialists has Improved
- MH Visits are more personalized - Quality of Care has Improved
- Standard of MH Care based on US Department of Health and Human Services' six core outcomes for children with special healthcare needs
- Resources available - Parents have Support and Direction
- SPAN Family Resource Specialists can:
 - Provide you with information
 - Connect you to healthcare financing resources
 - Help you develop skills to partner more effectively with health professionals
 - Give you emotional support



My Boys: The Wind Beneath My Wings

Thanks to Prompt Intervention, Support and Tireless Advocacy Efforts, Today they are a Success Story and Their Futures will be Bright.

Early Screening is Vital. Precious time should not be wasted debating if there is a delay and instead families should be connected to supports and Early Intervention. Referral delays can have a negative impact and compromise the positive outcomes garnered with early, effective therapeutic intervention. Remember to Give Families Hope in their Journey!

