**Family-centered care.** Because families are at the center of a child’s life, they must be equal partners in decision-making and all aspects of the child’s care. Family-centered care is community-based, coordinated, culturally and linguistically competent, and guided by what is best for each child and family.

**Partnerships.** Family-centered care is based upon strong and effective family-professional relationships built within the context of families’ and professionals’ cultural values and practices to improve decision-making, enhance outcomes, and assure quality.

**Quality, access, affordability and acceptability.** Children with special needs deserve primary and specialty health care that is of high quality, affordable, within geographic reach and respectful of family and community culture.

**Health systems that work for families and children.** Health policies and systems built on a foundation of family-centered, culturally and linguistically competent care must be the standard for all children.

**Informed families/strong communities.** Like their peers, children with special needs deserve every opportunity to enjoy a happy and healthy childhood at home in their communities. Families equipped with reliable, accurate information about ways to support their child’s health, education and social development will help them grow into productive adults as defined by their personal, family and community cultural beliefs and values.

**Self-advocacy/empowerment.** When informed and supported, young people with disabilities can make choices and advocate for themselves.

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**OUR PRINCIPLES**

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**FAMILY VOICES**

…keeping families at the center of children’s health care

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Family Voices aims to achieve family-centered care for all children and youth with special health care needs and/or disabilities.

Through our national network, we provide families tools to make informed decisions, advocate for improved public and private policies, build partnerships among professionals and families, and serve as a trusted resource on health care.

Every child and youth with special needs receives family-centered care.

It is estimated that 10.2 million children in the United States have special health care needs. Like other children and youth, those with special health care needs and/or disabilities deserve a happy, healthy childhood and youth — attending school, enjoying community events, living with their families, and worshiping with friends and neighbors — as well as the opportunity to become productive adults. However, unlike other children and youth, ours also have challenging health conditions — physical, mental, or emotional — that require more planning and attention. Any child or youth at any time could develop a disability or chronic health condition. While our children and youth require various levels of health care, all deserve quality, affordable, and accessible care.

Family Voices provides families resources to make informed decisions, advocate for improved public and private policies, build partnerships among professionals and families, and serve as a trusted resource on health care. We accomplish this work through the efforts of thousands across the country — family and youth leaders and members of our organization, Regional Coordinators, partners and allies, as well as our national Board of Directors and staff. It is only through the combined efforts of us all that we reach our goals.

There are Family Voices representatives in each state and territory across the country. These family leaders are ready to assist you with issues related to the health care of a child or youth with a special need or disability whom you love. To find the Family Voices contact in your state, please visit www.familyvoices.org, or call us toll-free at 1.888.835.5669.