

FACTS *for* FAMILIES

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11 Questions To Ask Before Psychiatric Hospitalization of Your Child or Adolescent

Hospitalization in a psychiatric facility is one of a range of available treatment options when a child or adolescent is mentally ill. Parents are naturally concerned and may be frightened and confused when inpatient treatment is recommended for their child. By asking the following questions, parents will gain a better understanding of the care proposed by admission to an inpatient facility:

1. Why is psychiatric inpatient treatment being recommended for our child, and how will it help our child?
2. What are the other treatment alternatives to hospital treatment, and how do they compare?
3. Is a child and adolescent psychiatrist admitting our child to the hospital?
4. What does the inpatient treatment include, and how will our child be able to keep up with school work?
5. What are the responsibilities of the child and adolescent psychiatrist and other people on the treatment team?
6. How long will our child be in the hospital, how much will it cost, and how do we pay for these services?
7. What will happen if we can no longer afford to keep our child in this hospital or if the insurance company denies coverage and inpatient treatment is still necessary?
8. Will our child be on a unit specifically designed for the treatment of children and adolescents and is this hospital accredited by the Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations (JCAHO) as a treatment facility for youngsters of our child's age?
9. How will we as parents be involved in our child's hospital treatment, including the decision for discharge and after-care treatment?
10. How will the decision be made to discharge our child from the hospital?
11. Once our child is discharged, what are the plans for continuing or follow-up treatment?

Hospital treatment is a serious matter for parents, children and adolescents. Parents should raise these questions before their child or adolescent is admitted to the hospital. Parents who are informed and included as part of their child's hospital treatment are important contributors and partners in the treatment process. If after asking the above questions, parents still have serious questions or doubts, they

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should feel free to ask for a second opinion. For additional information see *Facts for Families*:

- #24 When to Seek Help for Your Child
- #25 Where to Seek Help for Your Child
- #26 Understanding Your Mental Health Insurance
- #41 Making Decisions About Substance Abuse Treatment
- #42 The Continuum of Care
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The American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry (AACAP) represents over 8,500 child and adolescent psychiatrists who are physicians with at least five years of additional training beyond medical school in general (adult) and child and adolescent psychiatry.

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