

## QUESTIONS TO GUIDE YOUR FAMILY MENTOR EXPERIENCE

You may want to ask some of these questions directly. However, it is not necessary, or even desirable, to go through these questions in an interview format. Rather, they are questions to guide your observations. Again, they are intended to stimulate discussion with your family. Additionally, it will be valuable to work with your mentor family to come up with experiences that might also help you to answer these questions and gain relevant insights. (For example, to learn more about what it's like to go to the dentist with their child, you might actually see if you can arrange to accompany the family on a dental or other appointment).

**Remember, families who participate in this mentoring program are willing to share their story and are open to having questions asked . Families expect students to ask questions. In fact, for many parents, having a student ask questions is perceived as a student's genuine interest in their child or in what their family has to share.**

### Questions to guide your FIRST FEW VISITS

A few questions are listed here to help you get started. It will be valuable for you to generate additional questions as you work with your MCH Mentor (supervisor) to develop your goals for your family mentor experience.

Family system: Who lives at home, ages of siblings, daily routines- school, hours parents work, after school, neighbor interaction (if any), bedtime, mealtime, toileting, going places?

Child's likes and skills: Activities and toys your family's child enjoys; What are the child's special talents, challenges, diagnosis? How did your family receive the child's diagnosis?

School: Where child goes to school? What services does the child receive? How does the family feel about child's school situation? Does child have friends?

Family's ideas about how they see the mentoring process and what they want to do with it.

### SUBSEQUENT VISITS

#### Questions related to Family-Centered Care

What challenges might the family experience?  
(Managing child's behavior, medical issues, finding time for other family relationships, sibling's understanding, etc.)

Questions about day-to-day life: How is it different and how is it the same as with any other child? What's it like to go to the grocery store? What reactions if any does your family get from strangers? friends? family? What's it like to get a haircut for their child?

What does your family do for recreation? How has this been impacted by their child's special needs? What TV shows do they watch as a family? Do they ever go to the movies or out to a restaurant? What has been your family's experience locating daycare or childcare? **What defines them as a family?**

### **Questions related to Interdisciplinary Clinical Practice**

What experiences have they had with professionals?

What are the things professionals do that are supportive?

What are the things professionals do that get in the way of comfortable interactions and make things harder for families?

Have they had any experience with interdisciplinary teams with their child? What was their role as parent on the team? To what extent did the parent(s) understand what each discipline's role was and how the different disciplines interact to serve their child?

### **Questions related to Research**

How does your family learn about developments in the field or related to their child's diagnosis or needs?

Do they have questions about alternative therapies?

Does your family have questions about news reports, TV shows, or other sources of information that may have reported research related to developmental disabilities?

### **Questions related to Public Health Services**

What health care systems have your family used/accessed?

Has it been difficult finding providers who can be sensitive to children with special needs?

Does your family have a dentist for their child?

Has your family had difficulty with financing health care coverage or with getting services covered?

## **Questions related to Legislation and Advocacy**

Many parents find themselves thrust into the role of advocate for their child. Is this a role the parent(s) in your family may have had before having their child with special needs? How comfortable is this for them? Do they see it as valuable? Do they have the time?

Is your family aware of legislation regarding people with disabilities?

Has your family felt the need to use an outside advocate in any situation? (school, obtaining medical services, respite, recreational services, etc.)

Does your family know about the Parent Education Project (PEP), Wisconsin Coalition for Advocacy (WCA)?

Does your family know about the self-advocacy movement?

## **Questions related to Cultural Competency**

To understand more about your family's culture, consider asking a question like: "May I ask you about aspects of your culture?"

To be respectful of your family's culture and values, what is important for service providers to be knowledgeable of, to do, or to be sensitive to?

Are there activities or practices in Western culture which may be interpreted as offensive to your family's culture?

Does your family have special traditions related to their culture?

Does your family identify that access to services has been affected by their racial/ethnic/cultural heritage?

How does your family share information about their culture and values with service providers?

What might life be like for a person with a disability in your family's culture?

## **Question related to Inclusion and Accessibility**

What is your family's perspective on inclusion?

To what extent is their child included in school, in the community, etc?

What obstacles have they or do they face?

What community services for people with developmental disabilities has your family used?

How did your family locate these services? Were there any obstacles?

Has your family been involved with any parent support groups?

Does your family look ahead to their child's adulthood and vocational and residential services?