

Want more information?

<http://www.fpg.unc.edu/~ncodh/ChildandAdolescentHealth/index.cfm>

Questions?

Youth and young adults, contact:

Alliance of Disability Advocates
Center for Independent Living
919-833-1117
caroline.ambrose@alliancecil.org

Families, personal assistants, contact:

Exceptional Children's Assistance Center
704-892-1321 ext. 11
wward@ecac.org

Physicians and other providers, contact:

MAHEC – Continuing Medical Education
828-257-4490
irene.jurczyk@mahec.net



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If you're a teen with special health care needs, **you need to CHAT it up!**

The CHAT Project

Carolina Health And Transition

**CHAT is for you, your parents,
and your health care team.**

Funding provided by



Children & Youth Services Branch



CAROLINA
Health & Transition
PROGRAM

Growing up and becoming an adult is all about important changes, like increasing independence, and making decisions.

For youth with special health care needs, preparing to enter the world of adult health care is particularly important.



What does “special health care need” mean?

Youth with special health care needs (YSHCN) are people between the ages of 12 and 24 who have health challenges that impact them on a daily basis. They can have any number of conditions or diagnoses that require medical care, but here are just a few examples:

- ADHD
- Asthma
- Autism
- Cancer
- Congenital heart disease
- Cystic fibrosis
- Depression
- Developmental disability
- Diabetes
- Sickle cell
- Spinal cord injury



When do I start?

You can start early by paying attention to your health and learning some basics. What is your diagnosis, and how do you stay healthy? If you are on prescription drugs, do you know their names and the proper dose? Start asking questions, like “when do I take this medication, and why?”

Discuss with your parents and doctors any issues and concerns, and don't forget to tell them what you'd like to be doing in the future. Do you want to go to college? Do you want to play sports? What kind of work do you plan to do as an adult?

The main focus is to help you get ready for a healthy, happy and fulfilling adulthood!

How can CHAT help?

The CHAT program has educational materials for you, your family, your doctor and nurse. It gets everyone on the same page. Your pediatrician or other health provider, your parents, even your teachers, can all be working together to help you plan for your health and wellbeing as an adult. CHAT helps you put together your team!

What will I learn?

The CHAT curriculum for youth and young adults guides you through the process of moving from pediatric (children's) health care to adult health care. You'll learn some important information about such things as:

- advocating for yourself
- making more of your own decisions
- refilling your prescriptions
- scheduling your own appointments
- health insurance after you turn 18
- staying healthy
- making health an important part of your overall life goals!



What does CHAT include?

The CHAT program has three main parts to it:

1. Youth/Young Adult Curriculum
2. Family Curriculum
3. Medical Provider Practicum

Each section has material written by and for those three groups. For the youth materials, young people with special health needs from all around the state of North Carolina gave their opinions and advice. The family section was written by and for parents. And the medical practicum (think lesson plan) was written by and for health professionals.

All of the materials were developed around these key issues:

- What is health care transition?
- What is a medical home?
- What is my role in transition?
- What tools or workbooks will help?
- What about insurance?
- What is cultural competence?

There are also films available. These were produced by the University of North Carolina Center for Learning and Development, and the Exceptional Children's Assistance Center.

How much time does this take?

The CHAT program is mostly self-study and you go at your own pace. Nothing is timed, and the tests are just benchmarks for your progress. It helps you, your parents, and your doctors and nurses know when you are ready to fully transition, and transfer your medical care to an adult provider. Your adult provider may be a family physician, an internist, a specialist of some kind, a nurse practitioner, or a combination of these. You may be ready at age 18, or 22, or 24. There are no rules!