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Navigating the Health Care System When Your Child Has Cancer

Comprehensive care is an approach that cares for the whole patient and all their needs, not just the medical and physical ones. Comprehensive care – using the services of many professionals working together – is the standard approach at all major medical centers that treat young people with cancer. Some key aspects of well-designed comprehensive care are:

- State-of-the-art medical diagnosis and treatment, including the chance to take part in [clinical trials](#)¹
- A team of professionals who are experts in treating childhood cancer
- A wide range of services for patients and families, including education, counseling, [support groups](#)², advocacy, and other special programs to help improve the quality of life of patients and their families
- Referral to available local resources to help meet basic needs, such as meals, a place to stay during treatment, and transportation
- Patient and family education programs with up-to-date materials (written, audio, DVD, or computer programs)
- School programs, including contact with classroom teachers, teachers who work with homebound or hospitalized students, and help with going back to the student's neighborhood school
- Organized efforts to help patients cope with [treatment](#)³, [tests](#)⁴, and procedures
- Advocacy programs to help with families' financial concerns about treatment and related costs
- Consultation with community health care professionals (those near the child's home)
- Ongoing research that looks at and evaluates the results of all treatments and

services