

# Informing families of their child's disability



## the safe cross code

### Stop, Look and Listen: Know the Code!

1

#### “Look for a safe place”

- Ensure privacy,
- Be family-centred - have significant others present for support as parents wish, with another team member present for ongoing support after the initial consultation.
- Have contact details and phone numbers ready to provide to parents.

2

#### “Don't hurry, stop and wait”

- Sit down together and collect your thoughts and emotions before starting to speak.
- Introduce everyone present and their role in the child's support. Always address and refer to the child by name.
- Allow uninterrupted time, have someone cover pager/phone calls during this time.

3

#### “Look all around and listen” – “Before you tell – ask”

- Assess family's perceptions of the situation. Pace all information to the individual family needs.
- Use simple, straightforward, understandable language. Explain all medical/technical terminology used and avoid jargon.
- Impart information slowly and clearly. Check that the information has been understood.
- Acknowledge that several consultations may be required.

4

#### “Let all the traffic pass”

- Ensure communication is sensitive and empathetic.
- Acknowledge the family member's emotions and respond to them.
- Respect each family's dignity and reactions, being aware of cultural diversity.

5

#### “Walk straight across”

- Provide frank, open and honest information.
- Acknowledge uncertainty and outline plans for ongoing assessment, care and supports.
- Be realistic but retain hope.
- Focus on the child rather than the disability.

6

#### “Keep watching and listening”

- Informing this family is the first step on the journey together supporting and caring for this child with disability.