

Many of our patients are children whose parents are either separated or divorced. Our primary responsibility is to provide excellent pediatric care to our patients, and to promote and support their health and well-being. Brookline Pediatrics will remain neutral in all divorce/separation disputes. In such situations, we are happy to work with either or both parents to make sure the child's healthcare needs are met. It is our intent to work cooperatively with parents in accordance with any legal orders that are in place.

When a minor child visits our office accompanied by either parent/guardian, we will assume that parent has full or joint legal custody, and hence the authority to make medical decisions for the child, unless we are instructed otherwise, in writing, by a legal authority.

It is essential that we can depend on the child's parents/guardians to communicate clearly with each other about their child's health status and healthcare plans. This includes decisions regarding vaccinations, circumcision, reproductive education, medication, specialist consultation, etc., prior to visiting our practice. Our general approach is to communicate our medical assessments and recommendations with the parent who accompanies the child to the office, or with the parent who contacts us by telephone or electronic communication.

It is not feasible for us to contact each parent separately every time we see the child in the office. We are, however, happy to receive inquiries about the child's health from either parent at any time. These inquiries will not necessarily be kept private from the other parent and we ask that both parents are included in all written communication/emails sent to our office. If parents have shared legal custody of a child, we will typically include both parents in our reply.

We cannot mediate financial disputes between parents. When children visit our office, we hold the accompanying parent/guardian responsible for any payments required, regardless of the terms of any custody or divorce decree. Any disputes about reimbursement for medical expenses need to be settled between the parents privately.

Additionally, we will not:

- Call the other parent for consent prior to treatment or inform the other parent whenever visits are scheduled.
- Restrict either parent's/legal guardian's involvement in the child(ren)'s care, unless authorized by law.
- Tolerate appointment scheduling/cancelling patterns of behavior between parents.

It is both parents' responsibility to communicate with each other about the patient's care, office dates/visits and any other pertinent information relevant to the care of the child. Please do not ask our providers to call the non-attending parent following visits.

The providers and staff will not get involved in disputes between parents. If disputes regarding your child's medical care interfere with our ability to care for your child, we reserve the right to ask you to transfer care to another practice.

We understand that separation can be hard on children; your cooperation with each other, though challenging, is very important to your child's mental and physical health.