Introduction

Breakup of marriage and parenting relationships is a common occurrence in our society. During and following this process, children with special developmental needs have particular vulnerabilities and may require extra consideration around their care.

Conflict and breakdown of communication quite often occur during relationship breakdown, and can impact on collaboration with professional care providers.

At the CDN, we have established the following communication guidelines to enable clear understanding in our work with families where parents have separated.

Appointments, letters and other communication

When one parent makes an appointment, our policy is not to provide information regarding the timing of that appointment to the other parent. If such information is to be shared, we believe it should be communicated directly between parents.

It is our practice to provide copies of written correspondence to the attending parent in addition to the referring doctor. If this correspondence is to be provided to both parents, we believe that this sharing should occur directly between parents.

Exceptions to either of these practices may occur when either:

1. both parents have provided written permission for this to occur; or
2. we receive a court order directing that we should do this.

Attendance at appointments

If one parent books an appointment, we do not offer the other parent an automatic right to attendance at that appointment. We believe this invitation should come from the parent who makes the booking.

Decision making for a child's care

Cooperation between parents is necessary for therapeutic interventions to be most effective. Where conflict arises between parents regarding therapeutic decisions, in the majority of cases our role is to provide an opinion, rather than require or pursue a decision.

Where specific interventions are under consideration, such as the prescription of non-essential medication, our default is not to proceed unless both parents are in agreement.

Exceptions to this policy may arise depending on the needs of the child, or if there are appropriate legal guidelines (such as parenting orders).

CDN Policy 2013