

## Kitchener Downtown Community Health Centre

**Type of Policy:**  Administration (A) **Client Services**  
 Financial (F) **[X] General (CG)**  
 Board of Directors (B)  Programs (CP)  
 Human Resources (H)  Medical Services (CM)  
 Information Systems (I)  
 Occupational Health and Safety (S)  
 Volunteers (V)

**Policy No.: CG0901**

**Title: Responding to Child Custody Situations**

### Policy

KDCHC will ensure that we are aware of all child custody information for children being provided primary health care and that the information is documented.

### Guidelines

1. KDCHC will ensure that we have accurate and up to date information about child custody situations in order to protect the children whom we are serving.
2. Child custody is a legal designation. It is important to have that legal documentation as part of the client records.
3. “Access” is the right to spend time with a child and also the right to ask for and be given information about a child’s health, education and welfare
4. Sole custody is the right to make important decisions about the care and upbringing of a child.
5. If parents disagree about what is best for the child, it is the parent with custody who makes the final decision.
6. The parent with custody has an obligation to keep the parent with access informed about these matters. The parent with access does not have the right to make health care decisions about their child.
7. Parents who have joint custody can equally access information. In the event that a dispute arises between custodial parents, staff will inform parents that it is their responsibility to work out a decision in the best interest of the child.

## **Procedures**

1. During the intake session, the staff will ask the question: “Are there any issues with regard to child custody/access that we need to know about?” If so, the information should be documented in the chart. Staff will ask for proof of custody documentation which will be kept on file. The staff will add, “If there are any changes in the future, please let us know.”
2. When completing an intake/registration form where a child is being registered for individual or group programs which involve a child being dropped off or picked up by a parent/legal guardian, the staff will ask the parent to clarify who are the legal custodians and who is authorized to pick up or drop off the child. Ask if a non-custodial parent who has “access” or “visitation” rights has authorization to pick up or drop off. In this situation the staff should ask if there are any issues we should know about. This will be documented on the registration form.
3. At each appointment, staff providing services to children will make a note in the chart of who brings the child to the appointment.
4. If a non-custodial parent requests information, staff will review custody documentation in the chart. Staff may seek permission from the custodial parent/guardian to provide information
5. Should a custodial parent/guardian not wish information to be shared with the non custodial parent, this information should be documented in the chart and placed in the Alert section of the chart.
- 6. For a custody situation identified for a child who is a current client of the Centre**  
Should a child custody issue change for children who are current clients, the following procedures will be followed:
  - a. When information about the custody situation is made known to staff, this information will be noted in the Alert section of the chart. A note in the Alert pop up box will alert staff to check for a fuller description of the information. Staff will ask for paperwork from the client to ensure accuracy of the information.
  - b. The Most Responsible Provider should once a year ask the parent of all children known to have custody arrangements if there have been any changes to the custody situation. This can also be done when a client is assigned or re-assigned an MRP.

**This policy will be posted on the website.**

**Approved by:** Eric Goldberg, Executive Director

**Date:** December 21, 2016