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Dr. Joe Sanders, Executive Director
American Academy of Pediatrics
141 Northwest Point Boulevard
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Dear Joe,

I am glad we had a chance to talk today about the issues pertaining to the *New Mother's Guide to Breastfeeding* and Ross Pediatrics, as well as other related matters. As you know these issues are of great concern to the Section on Breastfeeding and to many other members of the Academy. I thought it would be useful to summarize the major points that we discussed.

I appreciate knowing that you prepared your response to me yourself, unlike many of the other responses that were mailed out. I did not realize until our conversation that your letter reflected the position of the Executive Committee of the AAP (Drs. Lou Cooper, Steve Berman and Carden Johnson). You also indicated that the letter was endorsed by the AAP Board of Directors at their meeting this past Friday.

I understand the need for the AAP to meet its budget needs in order to maintain its current levels of activity. I appreciate the strong commitment that the AAP and you yourself have to breastfeeding. I remain concerned, however, regarding the balance between the need to meet budget and the need to meet the primary goal of the Academy: assuring the very best of health for all children. Funds from Ross may help meet the financial needs of the AAP, but infant formula manufacturers achieve financial benefit from their marketing only if they achieve sales through results directly contrary to the AAP's own published policy "that breastfeeding continue for at least 12 months and thereafter for as long as mutually desired" by mother and child. AAP policy further recommends that only "infants weaned *before 12 months* of age...should receive...infant formula." Only an increase in premature weaning (before 12 months) provides potential for growth in infant formula sales to breastfeeding mothers. The AAP needs to consider that contradiction when helping a formula manufacturer market its product. I have heard for more than 30 years now from formula manufacturers that breastfeeding increases infant formula sales because mothers who breastfeed are more likely to purchase infant formula for a longer period of time than those who begin on infant formula initially. Is that something we want to promote?

We are both in agreement that we want the book to have the largest distribution possible and that the opportunity of having 300,000 to one million copies distributed to mothers and future mothers is very attractive. Making the book a best seller increases its shelf space in the major bookstores, as well, further enhancing its sales. There was

certainly no objection to the sale of the book to Ross. The concern was with the nature of the imprint and the proposed method of distribution. I did not realize until this phone conversation that Ross had originally asked that the imprint state "A gift from the Makers of Similac Infant Formula." Quite appropriately AAP marketing rejected that designation. Ross then suggested the use of just their company name and their teddy bear logo. While this eliminated the obvious marketing of infant formula, it allowed the reader or potential reader to come away with the impression that Ross was somehow involved in the writing, production or sponsorship of the book. As I suggested in my first letter, a compromise between these two options would have been better: "A Gift from Ross Pediatrics." I am relieved to know that the board has confirmed that any future sales of the book to Ross will have such an overprint instead of the one that is on the first batch of books. At the same time I am disappointed to learn from you that Ross will not be placing a cover label with the new designation on the 330,000 copies that it has in its warehouse, despite what Ms. Becky Johnson from Ross had not told me.

I am pleased to hear that Ross is *not* placing the book in the discharge gift packs, but will distribute the book only through physicians and other health care professionals.

Our conversation gave me some assurance that in future situations regarding marketing of products developed by our Section (and other Sections) the authors/editors will be consulted as to what is being considered. I also understand that you believe that it remains in the hands of the Executive Committee and the Board to make decisions on what and how marketing will be undertaken. I hope that the Executive Committee and the Board will take the views of the authors, editors and section leadership into consideration when making those decisions. In this recent situation, I believe that prior consultation would have avoided what has become a very uncomfortable situation for the Academy and for all of us regardless of what final decision was made. I strongly believe that one can never go wrong in seeking advice and having open discussion of all matters. Authors and editors of future publications may be reluctant to contribute their services to the Academy if they are uncertain about the manner in which their intellectual contributions will be handled. We have two new items in the pipeline at this time and these concerns have already been voiced.

Our final discussion focused on the issue that I raised about the need for the AAP to develop a formal set of principles and practices concerning its relationship to commercial organizations. Until our conversation today I did not realize that the AAP had never developed such a formal document or strategy and that it relied on various recommendations from other medical and marketing organizations. I strongly believe that the Board should empower a group of AAP members to undertake a careful review of this relationship and develop a document which would, with Board approval, become the basis for all commercial relations, whether marketing, exhibits, gifts or grants. A transparent policy would avoid the charges of secrecy and ad hoc decision-making. Many other organizations have developed such principles of operation. It is time for the AAP to do so, as well. We may learn a great deal about how other organizations have operated by going through a review of their documents. We have a number of eminent ethicists within the AAP family who can certainly help develop this set of principles, along with other members. I believe you agreed that this was a process that should be considered by the board.

As we both recognize, this issue is going to be a topic of continuing discussion and concern at the meeting in Boston in October. Your suggestion that one or more members of the Board of Directors meet with the Executive Committee of the Section on Breastfeeding is a good one and we will be making efforts to arrange a mutually agreeable time for that to occur. We also extend an invitation to you and to Dr. Cooper to meet with the Executive Committee, although you felt that someone other than yourself would be more suitable.

I have offered my services and that of the other members of the leadership team of the Section on Breastfeeding in helping move these issues into a productive process that will assure our focus on optimal health and development for children. I am, as always, willing to serve the needs of the American Academy of Pediatrics.

I will see you in Boston. Safe travels.

Yours,

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Chair, Executive Committee, Section on Breastfeeding
American Academy of Pediatrics