

# AMERICAN ACADEMY OF PEDIATRICS SECTION ON BREASTFEEDING

**Date:** December 20, 2002

**To:** Members, AAP Board of Directors  
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**CC:** Carden Johnson, M.D.  
Louis Cooper, M.D.  
Roger Suchyta, M.D.

**From:** AAP Section on Breastfeeding – Executive Committee & Leadership Group

**Subject:** *New Mother's Guide to Breastfeeding*

While we appreciate the opportunity of meeting with Dr. Sanders, Dr. Suchyta and members of the Board of Directors at our Section Executive Committee session in Boston, we must express our disappointment with the content of the discussion, the outcome of the meeting and lack of clear resolution of the issues. Considerable discontent remains among not only the Executive Committee and Committee Chairs, but section members and members of the breastfeeding community within and outside of the AAP membership. We feel that you were not responsive to our concerns and did not fully understand the depth of concern that we have with how this matter was handled and *continues* to be handled. You have not demonstrated an understanding or concern that the reputations of the editor of the book, Dr. Joan Meek, and those of us who are contributors to the book have been compromised. No apology or effort at remediation has been forthcoming from the Academy leadership to us or to the breastfeeding community. Similarly, there seems to be little recognition of the harm that has come to the Academy's reputation as a leader in the field of

breastfeeding and child health nor any effort to repair that sullied image of the Academy.

The plan presented to us for the next set of books to be purchased by Ross, if they choose to do so, with their name and logo again on the front cover, albeit with a statement that the book is a "gift from Ross" was made without any input from the authors or members of the section and is **not acceptable**. We request the opportunity to enter into open discussions about other ways in which Ross could be acknowledged. This dialogue is consistent with the "first step in establishing a collaborative relationship..." as stated in the AAP Policy Manual Chapter V, Page 6. The same policy manual recommends that the name or logo of the commercial organization "be placed, when possible, either on the inside cover or the back cover of a publication." (Page 4) Negotiations that include Ross (or other commercial enterprises), our leadership group, and Academy leadership may produce alternatives upon which we can all agree, such as a book wrapper. The AAP Policy Manual also states that "When the product (in this case infant formula) is relevant to the program (breastfeeding) special care must be exercised in the recognition language and placement to avoid any implied AAP recommendation or endorsement of the product."

At this time, we would appreciate receiving in writing:

- 1) a description of the plan for future sales of the *New Mother's Guide to Breastfeeding* to Ross or any other commercial purchasers.
- 2) a plan regarding commercial sales of all publications which the Section on Breastfeeding would produce in the *future*. Two of these publications (the Physicians' Handbook and the Slide Set for Teaching) are underway, but will not be finalized until we know how the issue of sales will be handled.

These statements in writing would provide an opportunity for discussion, not final decisions. We feel strongly that this is a matter which should be decided through discussion with the Section leadership and the authors of the publications. This document may serve as a model for other committees and sections of the Academy, many of whom have similar concerns and have expressed support for our position in this matter.

Many members of the Section on Breastfeeding, and others within and outside of the Academy, have expressed sufficient concern about this issue that they have said they are considering resigning from the Academy. We have urged them not to take that path, but to remain in the Academy as an active force for breastfeeding advocacy. Overt actions on the part of AAP leadership to demonstrate a commitment to the principles of ethics in marketing and responsible collaborative relationships with corporate sponsors are needed now to reassure our membership.

We were encouraged to hear from several board members that there was discussion of preparing a general document on commercial relations for member and public use. We urge that this new document be developed with open input from all interested AAP members.

Each of us looks forward to receiving more information from each of you regarding these issues and to meeting with you for discussion of these matters. We want the American Academy of Pediatrics remain a respected advocate for breastfeeding and we are prepared to make every effort to work with all of you to assure that this occurs.

Leadership Group – Section on Breastfeeding  
American Academy of Pediatrics

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