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BACA Custody Policy

The Bay Area Children's Association has a unique intake process. We pride ourselves on doing a thorough evaluation and addressing all issues that have an impact on the well-being of the children in our care. For this reason, we have a strict policy regarding this process.

It is required that both custodial parents be present at the 1st and 4th intake appointment. Even if the parents/caregivers are divorced, if there is **Joint Legal Custody** (physical custody does not matter) then consent and participation is needed from both parents. This is for both legal reasons and practical reasons.

The one exception to this rule is if there is joint custody and one caregiver is not involved in care of the child or lives out of the area, but is willing to sign the consent form and send documentation that the evaluation/ treatment may proceed, then we will provide services.

In general, we like all caregivers who play a significant role in raising the patient to be present (step-parents, grandparents, anyone who lives with the patient).

We will **not** do separate appointments for parents who are divorced and feel they cannot be in the same room with their former partner for 45 minutes on two separate occasions. We will make sure that all parties are respectful and appropriate during the sessions for the sake of their child. If this is the situation you are in, then you may want to consider pursuing **Sole Legal Custody**, in which case we will see a child with the consent of only the one legal guardian (though we still prefer to involve all caregivers).

If you cannot be in the same room with your former partner, and they play a significant role in your child's life, then without question this is affecting the mental health of your child, and would be something that we would want to resolve in treatment. We are willing to do couples counseling with ex-partners when there is willingness and motivation to improve communication and respect for the benefit of your child.

We realize that this may limit our ability to provide care for some families. There are likely other agencies/individuals that do not impose these restrictions.

Please feel free to contact us with any questions.