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Parental Presence Policy

This has been a topic of great controversy for many years. Virtually all studies designed to investigate the effect of parental presence in the surgery on the child's cooperation with dental treatment have failed to demonstrate any difference between behavior with or without the parent present. Only one reasonably well-designed study, by Frankl in 1962, has ever suggested that parental presence might affect child behavior. Frankl's results indicated that children of around 4 years old and younger behave more positively when parents were present. However, no difference was demonstrated in older children.

In most of the studies, parents were carefully instructed to sit quietly during the procedure and not to interfere with dentist-child communication. Frankl comment upon this in his concluding comments:

“the presence of a passively observing mother can be an aid to the child. **This can be accomplished if the mother is motivated positively, is instructed explicitly and cooperates willingly in the role of a silent helper.**”

Having said this, in the absence of any convincing evidence one way or the other, having the parent present during the treatment of preschool children remains a matter of individual choice.

We often state to the child “Our Rule”:

Mom or dad are allowed to stay in the room only if you behave and listen to Dr. Friedland.

We may sometimes ask the parent to leave the room if we “sense” it would be beneficial. This may happen even if you, the parent, are doing everything we asked you to do.

This is not a lecture 😊. We hope we can work together for a positive dental experience for your child. 😊

