



# What Preemie Parents Need to Know About the Pediatrician

**Dräger**

|  babyfirst



D-268-2023



### **About the author:**

**Deb Discenza** is the Founder and CEO/Publisher of PremieWorld, LLC and the co-Author to The Premie Parent's Survival Guide to the NICU. (<https://PremieWorld.com>).

She also runs the free Inspire Premie Community, 40,000+ strong at <http://premie.inspire.com>

## **What Premie Parents Need to Know about the Pediatrician**

If you are reading this I imagine you are either in the NICU about to prepare for discharge or you are already home and quickly realizing that life outside of the NICU is not the most coordinated world you had expected. You are farther ahead than I was back when I was preparing to bring home my 30-weeker daughter in 2003. In short, I found very quickly that while my daughter's pediatrician was understanding and helpful on many fronts and did absorb the communications from her various specialists over time as they discharged her from care, he remained a generalist in every sense of the word.



**Some tips on working with your child's pediatrician to create the most useful partnership:**

- **Within the first visit or two, assess the doctor's ability to listen to you and your concerns.** If you are being passed off as a neurotic parent, this is a red flag. A parent of a preemie is one for life. Prematurity does not change once the baby is discharged from the NICU to home. Yes the baby is bigger and yes the baby is doing better, but that is not the end of the story. It is actually the beginning of everything in seeing how your child's life will play out over time developmentally, educationally and more.
- **Make sure the doctor is doing regular developmental checks and giving you detailed feedback.** Granted pediatricians zoom through well-checks because they do a bunch of these day in and day out and could do it with their eyes closed. Yet every child is not your child and your child is at a greater risk for delays, for health challenges.
- **Are you and the pediatrician aligned in the same thinking across areas that are the hot buttons of parenting?** This could be surrounding breastfeeding, pumping, formula feeding, sleep safety and developmental concerns. You need to know that the doctor is a trusted source of information that is in line with your child's best needs. Not everyone parents the same way nor handles concerns the same way.
- **Remember that the office team is an extension of the pediatrician.** How does the office staff handle your need to cancel an appointment because your child ended up

in the emergency room in the middle of the night with a nasty ear infection? And on the other end, are you able to reach them during the night for help and also on weekends and holidays? When preemies have difficulty they don't do so with regular business hours in mind.

- **Practice administration should be your friend not your foe.** When trouble arises make sure to contact the Office Manager and/or Office Administrator. It could be as simple as a claim that was not properly processed, a misjudgment by the doctor to diagnose your child's illness which resulted in an emergency situation at home, or giving feedback on practice hours, rules, etc.

If you are miserable with the pediatrician, the practice, or staff, speak up. If you don't things won't change. Also, trust your gut. It could be that it may be time for a switch of practices.

I am happy to say that we have stuck with my daughter's pediatrician over the years all the way through. He is a good doctor and a good guy. But I also understood and talked with him about the limits of his medical advice as pediatricians are generalists. In our experience and in the experience of other parents I know, we have found that pediatricians are good for the general care aspect of well-check appointments and basic sick visits. Anything above and beyond that and especially related to developmental matters should be directed to a specialist. Make sure to keep that in mind.

For more information visit [www.babyfirst.com](https://www.babyfirst.com)

**BabyFirst** is supported by Drägerwerk AG & Co. KGaA.

## Imprint

**Corporate Headquarters**  
Drägerwerk AG & Co. KGaA  
Moislinger Allee 53-55  
23558 Lübeck, Germany

[www.draeger.com](https://www.draeger.com)