



### **Why should I have a portfolio of my child's medical records?**

By Gail Kimball

You may be asking yourself this question as you start or continue your journey of getting health care for your child. "Don't the doctors taking care of my child share information?" "Isn't everything in my child's file correct?"

The answers are: not always and not always!

With the passing of the HIPAA laws, it is harder for doctors to pass and receive information on you or your child unless you specifically put it in writing that your doctor can share. And even then, you can't be guaranteed they will share everything.

The best thing to do is to start keeping your own records. This can be done fairly easily and relatively inexpensively.

When I decided to take my daughter, Erin, to see a Pediatric Orthopedic doctor in Boston, I made sure to get my hands on every record that I could. Some were given to me on cd, some on paper, some I had to pay a copying fee, others were free.

I used a regular 3-ring binder, page protectors, and dividers. I set up each specialty in its own section: orthopedics, urology, genetics, radiology, and pediatrician notes. Then it was just a matter of putting all the copies in their respective places. I even typed up a list of all of Erin's doctors, their addresses and phone numbers. I then made a half a dozen copies and put those in the pocket in the front of the binder. By doing this, I saved myself the agony of trying to remember every one, and saved the doctors we were seeing the agony of trying to read my handwriting on those forms with the tiny spaces!

I do want you to know that the doctors, nurses, and techs that we dealt with were very impressed with what I had done. They jokingly gave me the "Most Organized Mom" award, but also their thanks. I was able to answer questions that I may not have been if I didn't have the binder with me.

If you are traveling to another state to see a doctor, make sure to keep the binder in your carry on luggage if you are flying. You can replace underwear when you arrive if your luggage gets lost, but it would be nearly impossible to replace that binder if you are far from home.

As you go to each visit, make sure you request a copy of the doctor's notes to be sent to you when they send them to your child's primary doctor. If they say they never do that (which has been said to me) I just look them in the eye and say "I need you to do it, and you just benefited from me having all the notes as well." The records belong to you and your child and there is no reason that you can't have copies.

Best of luck to you and your family!