This chapter discusses who can consent to or refuse medical treatment for a child, and considers in what circumstances the child themselves can make this decision. This involves discussion of Gillick competence, which refers to circumstances where a child is viewed as having the required maturity and understanding to make these decisions. It also examines the role that parents play in the decision-making process. It explores cases where parents and doctors disagree on the treatment proposed and consider how these disputes are resolved. The chapter concludes by considering an alternative route to settle disputes concerning the medical treatment of children and examines the role that mediation can take in this context. It considers whether this has the potential to avoid extreme situations, such as that seen with Ashya King's parents removing him from the hospital and fleeing the country to avoid the treatment proposed by the doctors and receive alternative treatment abroad.
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