

12:15-12:45

Child Custody Hearing

February 4, 2010

Room 140, Main Capitol Bldg.

9:45 a.m. – 3:15 p.m.

Testimony of Michael McCormick, Executive Director

American Coalition for Fathers and Children

www.acfc.org

“Children Need Both Parents”

**1718 M. St. NW # 187
Washington, DC 20036**

**Tel: 800 978-3237
email: info@acfc.org**

Dear Members of the Committee thank you for holding this hearing today on what is arguably the most significant issue affecting families in Pennsylvania, namely the state's interaction with its citizens through the vehicles of the family law and social service systems.

Today you are hearing from many different interests, each expressing concern that "whatever we do," "whatever the results of these efforts" the best interests of children must be at the forefront of our decision making. From this laudable goal the discussion of what actually is in the best interest of the child quickly devolves into a discussion reflecting the particular viewpoints of the various special interest groups whether they be parenting groups, the bar, social service agencies, the judiciary or domestic violence advocates. The discussion of the what the 'child's best interest' is has led to various notable comments. Hillary Clinton has referred to the Best Interest of the Child Standard as, "An empty vessel into which individuals pour their own prejudices." In 2002, the American Bar Association noted that the BIC standard is more an "aspiration" than a standard due to its "vagueness", "breadth", and "subjectivity". Evidenced clearly by the variety of opinions being expressed here today there is still significant debate over what constitutes the best interest of the child.

Perhaps it would be beneficial to recall what family the American Bar Association on the founding of the family law section in 1952.

"The ultimate purpose of this organization shall be to bring about improvement in the laws of the several states relating to marriage and divorce and allied phases of family life, to the end that the law, in both philosophy and procedure, may tend to conserve, not disserve, family life; that it may be constructive, not destructive, as to marriage; that it may be helpful, not harmful, to the individual partners and their children; that it may be preventive, rather than punitive as to marriage and family failure."

- Core of the original mission statement of the Family Law Section of the ABA. Judge Paul W. Alexander of Toledo, Ohio. Author of "Public Service by Lawyers in the Field of Divorce," Ohio State Law Journal, Vol. 13, 1952, p11.

Too often today family court rarely reflects what should continue to be a guiding principle for both statute development and operation of the family court system. One of the great tragedies of our family law system today around the nation is that millions of children live within a few short miles or a few short minutes of one of their parents and are effectively precluded from a full relationship with that non-residential/non-custodial parent as a result of a court order that rarely fully reflective of the child's best interests. Courts are not necessarily to blame for this. In the face of competing experts offering contradictory testimony, or in the case of special interest influences a judicial determination of the child's best interest can be challenging.

Our current statutory schemes regarding divorce and child custody are young in the context of the modern era of widespread divorce. Divorce was relatively rare a mere 50 years ago when only 7% of children were raised outside the environment of an intact two parent home. The primary cause leading to single parent headed households was not divorce or out of wedlock child birth, but rather a parents' death. Today over 40% of our nations children can expect to spend a significant part of their childhood separated from one of their parents, primarily as a result of divorce and out of wedlock childbearing. Currently over 23 million American children experience this reality on a daily basis.

Many state statutory schemes reflect the use of social science data based on research conducted during the 1960's – 1980's. Research during this time frame tended to focus on the importance of mother/child bonds. Reflective of this research, statutory schemes which

embodied concepts like the tender years and primary care giver doctrines typically reflected the preference for awarding custody of children to mothers.

Over the past 15 years there has been a significant body of research developed which focuses on child attachment bonding and the role of fathers in child development. At this time statutory schemes are only beginning to reflect the results of this research. A great opportunity, and obligation, rests with this legislature to construct a statute which reflects what we have come to know about children's need for both parents. The balance of my comments will highlight some of the research findings. Accompanying this statement is, for lack of a better term, a 'meta-analysis' of the latest research on the benefits of two parent involvement and child development. Perhaps most importantly, we need to seriously consider what our children are saying about these issues and what the research tells us about their best interests.

Most importantly, research is telling us that children want more time with both their parents. When surveyed, adults who experienced their parents divorce as children indicate their top choice for living arrangements would have been to have lived equal amounts of time with both parents. Given the typical visitation arrangement today is 2 of every 14 days for the non-primary residential parent, we have a long way to go on that measure. Further, research indicates spending substantial time with both parents increases the likelihood of positive outcomes for kids. Research is indicating that children should spend a minimum of 35% time with both parents and as movement towards equal time sharing increases so do positive outcomes. Some will argue against this, and sure there are times when substantial time would

be inappropriate but we should remember that those situations are the exception. Laws made by the exceptions tend to be poor laws.

There are long term health benefits for children who remain fully engaged with both parents.

The likelihood of a child being alienated from a parent is lowered when children have full access to both parents. The question arises here about high conflict parents. Research shows conflict tends to diminish over time and the benefits of remaining involved with both parents outweighs the loss of a parental relationship. Of course extra care needs to be taken in founded cases of spousal abuse.

You can read more about what the research says in the accompanying report. In conclusion, it's the responsibility of our elected officials to craft the best possible statutes in the face of competing interest. Utilizing current social science research can provide significant positive guidance in that process. Continuity of relationship with both parents is in the child's best interest and leads to stability for the child. The best possible outcomes for children in non-intact families are achieved when children spend maximum time with both parents.

Shared Parenting after Divorce: Fact and Fiction

FN Original FN – final f

Dr. Linda Nielsen Wake Forest University

nielsen@wfu.edu 1/19/10

In citing this article, please cite as being “under review” by several academic journals.

As family members, policy makers, counselors, or family court workers, we share a common goal: to create the best possible outcomes for children after their parents divorce. One of the most significant questions is what type of living arrangement is best for these children. Traditionally the legal system has had children live exclusively or almost exclusively with their mother, spending only a couple of weekends a month with their father. This has meant that most children have lived in their father’s home for no more than 15% of their childhood years. In the U.S. only 10%-15% of these children are living at least 25% of the time with their fathers (Kelly, 2007) Yet there is growing national and international interest in “shared parenting” or, using the more outdated phrase, “shared physical custody” – which means children living with their fathers at least 25% and as much as 50% of the year. As the term is used by social scientists and in the legal profession, “shared parenting” means that children are living with both parents for at least a third of every year. A “presumption of shared parenting” law automatically grants both parents 50% of the time with their children, as long as each adult is a fit and loving parent. While the parents are free to decide what percent of the time the kids will live with each of them, neither parent has to “fight” legally to live with the children for up to half of each year (Elrod & Spector, 2004). So far Australia is the only country to have adopted this legal policy (Parkinson, 2010). So why hasn’t shared parenting legislation been more widely adopted? In addressing this question, I will examine many of the fears and fictions commonly raised in regard to shared parenting.

Initially we might ask: where do these fictitious beliefs and fears come from? How do people get these ideas if most of research doesn’t support them? Quite simply: social science is often misused and misinterpreted, yet widely disseminated in the media and consequently embraced by the public. Beliefs about “what the research proves” abound when scraps of information are pooled and savored without careful scrutiny. Especially with issues as emotionally charged as shared parenting, studies with small, non-representative samples based on information gathered two to three decades ago can be spun into “the truth” to support a particular point of view. I have attempted to avoid that trap by relying primarily on research published within the past decade in academic journals or in books written by academic researchers. So let’s examine the fears and fictions related to shared parenting.

Most sons and daughters do not pay a long lasting or significant price for having little or no relationship with their fathers after the parents’ divorce. As long as the mother and kids have enough money, the kids can get along fine with little or no contact with their dad. The research is remarkably consistent on this point: the divorced dad’s relationship with his children has a very significant and long-lasting impact. Those who receive too little or no fathering are more likely to have problems throughout their lives than those whose fathers stayed actively involved in their lives after the divorce. As teenagers, the “under-fathered” are more likely to have babies, to have sex at an early age and to be sexually promiscuous (Jeynes, 2001). They’re also more apt to make bad grades,

drop out of high school, and never make it to college (Chadwick, 2002; Menning, 2006). They are more aggressive and more likely to break the law (Coley & Medeiros, 2007; Harper & McLanahan, 2004). With more self image problems (Dunlop, Burns, & Bermingham, 2001), they also abuse drugs and alcohol more often, even when they don't live in poor communities (Hoffmann, 2002; Lerner, 2004). Not surprisingly, these teenagers have more emotional, psychological and social problems than those with close, ongoing relationships with their fathers (Amato & Gilbraith, 2009; Carlson, 2006; King & Soboleski, 2006; Reifman, 2001; Stamps, Booth, & King, 2009; Stewart, 2003).

Having a close, ongoing relationship with dad after a divorce also has health benefits. These teenagers are less likely to be extremely overweight or extremely underweight (Menning & Stewart, 2008). The younger children also enjoy better overall health (Troxel & Mathews, 2004) And as young adults, they have fewer stress related illnesses such as insomnia, headaches, and intestinal problems (Fabricius & Luecken, 2007).

As adults, sons and daughters who received too little fathering after their parents' divorce have more troubled, more unstable romantic relationships. Many also have ongoing sadness and distress that stem from feeling unloved by their fathers (Adamson & Pasley, 2006; Ahrons, 2004; Bartell, 2006; Demo & Fine, 2010; Emery, 2004; Harvey & Fine, 2004; Fabricius, Braver, Diaz, & Schenck, 2010; Gasper, 2009; Hetherington & Kelly, 2002; Marquardt, 2005; Wallerstein & Blakeslee, 2004; Zimmerman & Thayer, 2003). Indeed, regardless of whether or not their parents were divorced, college students who had good relationships with their dads were more trusting, secure and satisfied in their romantic relationships than those with troubled or distant relationships (Schaick & Stolberg, 2001).

Overall then, there is little or no debate on this point: the weakening or loss of the father-child relationship after divorce has a far reaching impact well into the children's adulthood. It follows, then, that measures such as shared parenting that preserve and strengthen these relationships protect sons and daughters against many of the negative, lifelong consequences of their parents' divorce.

But isn't it true that daughters don't need or benefit from shared parenting as much as sons do? Don't daughters want and need less time than sons do with their dads? Actually no. Daughters need just as much time with their dads as sons. In fact, divorce often does more damage to the daughter's relationship with her father than to the son's. Why? In part it's because a daughter is usually closer to her mom and the son closer to his dad before the divorce (Ahrons, 2007; Scott, Booth, & King, 2007; Nielsen, 2008). Also divorced dads tend to spend more time with their sons than with their daughters (King, Harris, & Heard, 2004; Stamps et al., 2009) Then too, many divorced mothers lean more heavily on their daughters than on their sons for advice and comfort, confiding too much about the divorce in ways that can turn the daughter against her father (Ahrons, 2007; Hetherington et al., 2002; Jurkovic, Thirkield, & Morrell, 2001; Koerner, Kenyon, & Rankin, 2006; Koerner & et al, 2004; Marquardt, 2005). Daughters also tend to get more upset than sons by their parents' conflicts, which may further weaken the father-daughter relationship (Frank, 2004; Harper & Fine, 2006). As a consequence, adult daughters are more likely than sons to long for and to have missed the benefits of a good relationship with their fathers (Ahrons, 2007; Fabricius, 2003; Finley & Schwartz, 2007; Harvey et al., 2004; Hetherington et al., 2002; King et al., 2006; Knox,

Zusman, & DeCuzzi, 2004).

Still though, aren't most children and their fathers already satisfied with the amount of time they spend together, meaning there's no real need for more shared parenting? Sadly, no. The overwhelming majority of teenagers and young adults say they want – or wanted – more time with their fathers. They do not like - or did not like - only living with their dads 15% of the time or not getting to live with him at all (Ahrns, 2004; Emery, 2004; Fabricus, 2003; Harvey et al., 2004; Hetherington et al., 2002; Marquardt, 2005; Parkinson, Cashmore, & Single, 2005; Smith, 2003; Schwartz & Finley, 2009; Wallerstein et al., 2004) And most of their fathers agree: 15%-20% of the time with their kids isn't enough. This arrangement leaves most divorced dads longing for more time with their children and feeling heartbroken, discouraged, and grief stricken (Amato & Dorius, 2010; Bonach, Sales, & Koeske, 2005; DeCuzzi & Lamb, 2004; Frieman, 2007; Madden & Leonard, 2000; Nielsen, 1999; Spillman, Deschamps, & Crews, 2004; Stone & Dudley, 2006) .

Regardless of what most kids and their fathers want, aren't they already getting enough time together to reap the benefits of an involved, meaningful relationship? No, most are not. Most researchers agree with what children and fathers are telling us: being together only 15%-20% of the time and not living together on a regular basis is rarely enough to create or to maintain the kind of meaningful, involved relationship that helps kids overcome the negative impact of their parents' divorce (Amato et al., 2010; Cashmore, Parkinson, & Taylor, 2008; Fabricius et al., 2010; King et al., 2006; Kelly, 2007; Peters & Ehrenberg, 2008; Stewart, 2003).

But isn't it true that shared parenting won't work for most divorced parents because they have too much conflict? So isn't it better to limit the children's time with their dad so they won't be exposed to as much conflict? Sounds reasonable, but the answer is "no". To begin with, most divorced parents' are not in high conflict – and their conflict is not physical. Roughly 85%-90% of divorced parents' conflicts are verbal - arguing, bickering, criticizing, insulting or demeaning each other. When we think of children "witnessing parents' conflicts", we might envision terrified kids helplessly watching an enraged parent battering their other parent. Yes, there are children who are exposed to these horrendous situations. But only 10%-15% of divorced parents are in this high conflict, physically abusive group (Kelly, 2007).

Fortunately, most divorced parents argue and bicker less as time goes by. And most learn to co-parent or parallel parent in one form or another. True, very few become friendly buddies. But most learn to cooperate well enough – or at least stay out of each other's way and keep their arguments private enough - to limit the damage to the kids (Adamson et al., 2006; Ahrns, 2004; Emery, 2004; Hetherington et al., 2002). With help from counselors and educators, even uncooperative, angry parents can often learn to stop putting the kids in the middle and be more cooperative (Blaisure & Geasler, 2006; Brandon, 2006; Cookston, Braver, & Griffin, 2008; Criddle & Scott, 2005; Fine & Pei, 2005; Garber, 2004; Lebow & Rekart, 2007; Stone, 2006; Toews & McKenry, 2007).

Maybe so, but what could be worse than hearing your parents argue, bicker, criticize or belittle each other – especially if you get caught in the middle? Well, here's what *is* worse: losing a relationship with your dad or feeling unloved or ignored because he is spending so little time with you. Especially in the first few years after the divorce, kids need the comfort of their father's love and attention. The most essential question is

not: “Is conflict bad for kids?” The more pivotal question is: “What has the most negative and the most long-lasting impact – spending too little time with dad or being exposed to parents’ verbal conflicts?”

True, being repeatedly exposed to parents’ arguments is bad for kids – even for grownup kids and even when the parents are still married. Being put in the middle and having to side with one parent against the other can lead to depression, anxiety and alienation from a parent – usually the father. But children are damaged in these ways whether the parents are divorced or still married. For example, college students whose married parents have a lot of conflict feel more stress from being caught in the middle than young adults whose parents are divorced (Amato & Afifi, 2006). Similarly teenagers who get caught in the middle of their married parents’ conflicts are stressed and depressed (Buehler, 2009) and have more externalizing and internalizing problems (Shelton, 2008). Even five and six year-olds have more problems at school and are more depressed when their married parents are in conflict (Ablow, 2009).

Not surprisingly then, after the parents divorce, the more exposed the kids are to the ongoing conflicts, the more likely they are to have stress-related health problems (Michael, Torres, & Seemann, 2008) and academic, social, emotional or psychological problems (Ahrns, 2007; Demo et al., 2010; Gasper, 2009; Hetherington et al., 2002). For example, the more conflict their divorced parents have, the more uncomfortable college students are with intimacy in relationships (Morris & West, 2001; Platt & et al, 2008). So, yes, being repeatedly exposed to their parents’ bickering and fighting has a negative impact on children.

But when it comes to divorced parents, there’s the catch: Their children benefit by having an ongoing, active relationship and by spending plenty of time with their father *even when their parents argue, bicker and disagree*. Remember though: this is not true for the 10-15% of children whose parents are in the “high conflict” groups and who are physically abusive. Surprisingly, the amount of time that kids spend with their father has little or no impact on the amount of conflict between the parents - even for those kids who live with their father a substantial part of the year (Bauserman, 2002; Emery, 2004; King et al., 2006; Kelly, 2007; Sandler, Miles, Cookston, & Braver, 2008) Especially when the parents are behaving like jackasses, kids need plenty of time being with and living with their dad – time filled with love, attention and reassurance. For example, college students say that regardless of how much verbal conflict their parents had, the more time they lived with their dad, the closer they felt to him and the better they adjusted to their parents’ divorce. The time with dad counter-acted the parents’ conflict (Fabricius et al., 2007). Likewise, teenagers whose parents had conflicts, but who spent plenty of time with their dad - or who lived with him for a substantial part of the year - were closer to their fathers and had fewer divorce related problems than those who lived almost exclusively with their moms (Buchanan & Maccoby, 1996). Similarly, four to twelve year olds whose parents had low conflict, but who did not have a close relationship with their father, were more depressed and anxious than kids whose parents had more conflict but who had a close relationship with their father (Sandler et al., 2008) Think of it this way: Kids are far better off knowing that their dad loves them and reaping the benefits of having a close relationship with him because they spend so much time together – especially if they get to live with him for a substantial part of every year -

even though their parents act like jerks around each other. Bottom line: limiting the time with their father isn't going to make conflict any easier for most kids to handle.

Then too, not all conflict is equally harmful – and some may actually be beneficial. It's not the existence of conflict that has the most impact negative impact on the kids. It's the content and nature of the conflict (Adamson et al., 2006; Emery, 2004; King et al., 2006) That is, a highly involved father might disagree more with the mother about what's good for the kids than a disengaged father who dumps all of the parenting on the mother. This kind of "conflict" between caring parents is a good thing. Then too, arguments aren't harmful when they are carried out in private. Remember too that children whose parents argue a lot after their divorce usually aren't experiencing something new. This isn't good news. But it does mean that many kids have learned how manage conflict in ways that allow them to love and be loved by both parents.

Finally, why assume that the best way to reduce conflict is to have the kids live almost exclusively with one parent (usually their mother) – and to minimize time with their other parent (usually their father) ? In fact, a parent is more likely to be angry and uncooperative when he or she is being marginalized from the children's lives. Instead of using parental conflict as an argument against shared parenting, we should be asking: How can we help parents reduce their conflicts while maximizing the children's living time with both parents? This would spare children from having to pay a double penalty for their parents bad behavior: the stress of the parents' conflicts *and* the heartbreak and lifelong consequences of a weakened bond with either parent.

But even if the conflict is minimal, doesn't the mother have to be enthusiastic about the children's living with their father before the kids can reap the benefits of shared parenting? It seems reasonable to assume that kids reap the greatest benefits – or reap benefits more quickly - when both parents are enthusiastic about shared parenting from the outset. But this doesn't mean that children don't benefit unless the mom is enthusiastic about it. In families where the father has joint legal custody and ample time with the kids, even against the mother's wishes, the kids are still benefitting. These dads generally pay more child support and spend more time with the kids than dads whose time with their kids is minimized because the mother opposed shared parenting (Braver, Cookston, & Cohen, 2002; Wallerstein et al., 2004). Likewise, in families where the kids did live with their dad for a substantial part of the year- even against their mothers' initial wishes - the kids still benefitted academically, socially and emotionally (Bauserman, 2002; Buchanan et al., 1996).

In regard to many of the questions raised about shared parenting, a recent meta analysis endorsed by the American Psychological Association is especially noteworthy (Bauserman, 2002). Children whose parents had joint legal or joint physical custody were better off than those who lived almost exclusively with their mother in sole custody. Having spent more time with their fathers, these kids had better social and psychological adjustment, higher self esteem, more academic success, and better adjustment to their parents' divorce. Even when the parents were in conflict and even when the mother initially objected to the joint custody or joint residency, the children benefitted. Even when there was ongoing conflict, kids benefitted most when they lived at least 25% of the time with their dad. In other words, kids reap the benefits of shared parenting even when the parents don't get along well.

But don't children need the "stability" of living with one parent rather than the instability of living in two homes? Yes, kids do benefit from *stability* – the *emotional stability* that comes from having a continuous, active, loving relationship with both parents. And this type of stability is extremely difficult to achieve when kids only get to live with one of their parents for 15% -20% of the time. Is it a hassle to live in two homes? Sure – though probably less of a hassle than those of us who haven't done it might imagine. But is the hassle worth it? Yes. Who says? The children do. Looking back at their childhoods, those teenagers and young adults who lived a substantial part of every year with their fathers said this was the best choice – mainly because they were able to maintain a close, loving relationship with their fathers (Buchanan et al., 1996; Finley et al., 2007; Fabricus, 2003; Laumann & Emery, 2000).

Another assumption is that "stability" must be preserved by having the children spend the same amount of time with each parent after the divorce as they spent together during the marriage. For example, if one parent was providing 70% of the childcare while married, then the kids should spend 70% of the time with that parent after the divorce. Again though, the kind of stability most needed by kids is a stable *relationship* with both parents. While married, each parent creates this emotional stability with their children, even though very few parents spend equal time with the kids. This emotional stability comes from feeling each parent's "presence" in their daily lives – a stable presence that is not based on spending equal time with mom and dad (Krampe & Newton, 2006). And this stable presence – this stable bond- is more easily preserved when children continue to live with each parent for a substantial amount of time after their divorce.

In regard to how to allot the parenting time after divorce, the parenting time is much more equal during the marriage than many of us might assume. Sadly, the myth of the "second shift" mom still lingers: the belief that most employed mothers do almost all of the childcare and housework after coming home from work, while their lazy, disengaged husbands lounge in front of the TV. In reality, most employed married parents spend roughly the same time with their kids – especially if they work and commute equal hours. Most married dads spend 25-30% less time with the kids than the moms do – mainly because most dads have to spend more time at work and have to earn more of the family's income than most moms (Amato & Booth, 2006; Bianchi, Robinson, & Milkie, 2006; Milke, 2004). In short, there is no "second shift" for most married women. Most moms and dad are both doing a "second shift" in childcare and housework. This means that based on what parents were doing during the marriage, after a divorce most kids would live at least 30% of the year (120 days) with their fathers.

But why put kids through the ordeal of trying to live with both parents since most of them eventually drift back to living with their mother full time? No, this "maternal drift" is not inevitable or common. The living arrangements that the parents initially establish generally stay pretty stable. Most kids living in two homes do not go back to live full time with their mothers. And those who do seldom change homes because they want to spend less time with their father. In a 2004 survey of 600 families, 90% of the kids were living in exactly the same arrangement that their parents had chosen when they divorced three years earlier. And most families who changed the original plan made the change because the kids wanted to spend more time living with their dads (Berger, 2008). Even as far back as twenty years ago in a study with 522 children, very few families changed the original plan. Only 2% of the kids moved back to live full time with their mom.

Another 5% moved to live full time with dad, and 5% moved from living with mom to living equally with both parents. The main reason for changing was that a parent had moved and the kids didn't want to change schools and lose friends. The second reason was that the kids wanted to spend more time living with their dad (Buchanan et al., 1996).

But if children live with their fathers for more than 15%-20% of the year, won't the kids be worse off financially because their dads will spend less money on them? Besides, isn't the main reason dads want their kids to live with them to lower their child support payments? These beliefs fall flat for several reasons. First, divorced dads generally spend more money on their kids (camps, computers, toys, clothes, sports equipment, enrichment activities) and on their children's college educations when they have their kids living with them more of the time – and when they are getting to spend ample time with their kids (Aquilino, 2005; Fabricius & Braver, 2003; Nepomnyaschy, 2007; Peters & et al, 2004; Wallerstein et al., 2004). Second, most dads want their kids to live with them more than five or six days a month because they love them, not because they are scheming to reduce their child support payments (Maccoby & Mnookin, 1992; Braver, 1998; Maccoby et al., 1992).

But if kids live with their fathers for a larger part of each year, won't this weaken their relationships with their mothers? This assumption stems from a fear that many divorced parents seem to have: I'm afraid my kids will love me less if they spend too much time with their other parent. But the comforting reality is that the amount of time the dads and kids spend together – even when the kids live with their dad more than 30% of the time – has no negative impact on the mother-child relationship. More time with dad doesn't add up to less love for mom (Buchanan et al., 1996; Fabricius, 2003; Lee, 2002).

Still though, don't preschool children need to live full time with their mother in order to remain securely attached to their "primary" caretaker? Popular as this belief may be, there are a number of underlying flaws (Lamb, 2007; Pruett, Insabella, & Gustafson, 2005; Riggs, 2005; Warshak, 2007). First, emotional attachment is not based on which adult spends the most time with a child. If that was true, then millions of children would be more attached to their day care workers or relatives than to their parents. More important still, infants and preschool kids need to be securely attached to *both* parents regardless of which parent spends the most time providing their daily care. Each parent's bond has an equally powerful impact on young children – an impact that lasts a lifetime. Moreover, if a young child is far more strongly attached to one parent, this isn't necessarily a good thing – and is not a reason for giving that parent most of the time with the children after a divorce. Kids can become more strongly attached to the emotionally disturbed, depressed or needy parent than to the healthier, "better" parent. The idea that there is – or that there should be – one "primary" parent for children to bond to is outdated and unsubstantiated. Children need a secure bond with both parents – a bond that comes from spending overnight time with each parent after their divorce (Stroufe, 2005). Indeed, four to six year olds who spend nights in each parents' home have fewer problems than those who spend every night in only one parent's home (Pruett et al., 2005). Fortunately guidelines for creating parenting plans for infants and young children are now available to assist parents and family court workers (Association of Family and Conciliation Courts, 2006; Pruett et al., 2005).

But can't those parents who don't spend enough time with their preschool kids to

create a secure bond “make up for lost time” later in the child’s life? No, not likely. Both the strength and the quality of these early bonds are extremely difficult to change later in childhood. The kind of bond each parent creates with their young child is remarkably stable throughout that child’s life. As the old saying goes: “as the twig is bent, so the tree shall grow”. In divorced or in married families, the parent and child who haven’t established a secure bond in early childhood both pay a price for years to come (Krampe et al., 2006; Silverstein & et al, 2002; Stroufe, 2005; Whitbeck, Hoyt, & Hutchinson, 1994) .

But what if some children want to live exclusively with one parent and don’t want to spend much time with the other? Shouldn’t we respect their wishes instead of insisting on shared parenting? As kind hearted as this sounds, giving children this kind of power and responsibility is not in their best interests when both parents are competent and loving. To begin with, some children are overly attached to one parent in unhealthy ways that prevent them from creating – or from wanting - a close bond with their other parents (Titelman, 2007). Then too kids often prefer to live with the most lenient, permissive parent or with the emotionally needy parent who relies on them like an adult friend (Garber, 2007). Sadly, children can also be reluctant to spend much time with their father because their mom has said so many negative things about him. These moms undermine the father-child relationship by disclosing details about the marriage and divorce that have nothing to do with the dad being a fit and loving parent (Afifi, 2007; Hetherington et al., 2002; Jurkovic et al., 2001; Koerner et al., 2004; Leudemann, 2006). Carried to the extreme, this parental alienation can cause children to completely reject their non-residential mom or dad (Baker, 2007; Clawar, 2003; Warshak, 2010). In any event, we shouldn’t “let the tail wag the dog” by allowing children to make the final decisions about shared parenting.

Finally, we must ask: Why devote our attention to shared parenting? Don’t our state laws already allow moms and dads to live with their children for a substantial part of every year? And aren’t most professionals who work in the family court system already supporting shared parenting? Unfortunately, no. To begin with, no state allows children to live with each of their parents equally unless both parents agree to this (Elrod et al., 2004). The problem is that mothers are generally more opposed than fathers are to sharing the parenting and the residential time (Adamson et al., 2006) (Ahrons, 2004; Bonach et al., 2005; Cookston et al., 2008; Markham et al., 2007). In part this might be because, after a divorce, women tend to stay angrier longer, to harbor more resentment and to be less willing to forgive than men (Bonach et al., 2005; Duck & Wood, 2006; Hetherington et al., 2002; Hilton & Frye, 2004). And these mother’s feelings are abundantly clear to the kids. Many young adults say that when it came to criticizing, badmouthing, and demeaning their other parent after the divorce, their mothers were worse than their fathers. Even though these children knew that their fathers wanted to spend more time with them, they also knew their mothers opposed it (Harvey et al., 2004; Fabricus, 2003; Madden & Leonard, 2002; Silverberg, 2004). A mom is more likely to agree to shared parenting when her family and friends believe this is the ethical and loving thing to do (Markham et al., 2007). And she’s less angry if she has finished grieving, is no longer emotionally attached to her ex husband and has forgiven him (Rye & et al, 2004) (Sbarra & Emery, 2006). But at the time the parents are negotiating about shared parenting, many parents have clearly not reached this level of forgiveness. This

isn't to say that there aren't mothers who are more enthusiastic about shared parenting than the fathers. Clearly there are. Still, generally speaking moms are less willing to share the parenting than dads.

A mother's opposition to shared parenting also spills over to the children because she generally discloses more of the gritty, unpleasant details of the divorce than their father does – portraying him as the bad guy in the children's eyes (Afifi, 2007; Dolgin, 1996; Jurkovic et al., 2001; Koerner et al., 2004; Leudemann, 2006; Nielsen, 2006; Western, Nelson, & Piercy, 2002). Moreover, many children first hear about the divorce from their mom, not from both parents – giving her a special power to shape their feelings (Western et al., 2002). Not surprisingly, many children tend to blame their fathers, not their mothers, for the divorce (Butler, 2003; Jennings & Howe, 2001). More disturbing still, some mothers are so opposed to shared parenting that they falsely accuse their ex-husbands of being physically abusive (Dutton, 2006; Jaffe & et al, 2008; Johnston, 2005; Kruk, 2008; Thocme & Bala, 2005).

It is not only mothers, however, who are often opposed to shared parenting. A number of judges, lawyers, and custody evaluators are unenthusiastic about – or adamantly opposed to – shared parenting, especially for young children. Lawyers and judges have admitted that the legal system and state laws are biased against fathers who want to share the parenting (Braver et al., 2002; Dotterweich, 2000; Stamps, 2002) (Williams, 2007) - a conclusion reached by researchers as well (Kruk, 2008; Nathanson & Young, 2006). Too many custody evaluators also oppose shared parenting, as evidenced by this evaluator's conclusions: "This five year old child will be irreparably damaged were she to spend even one overnight away from her mother" (Kelly & Johnston, 2005).

Given the opposition to shared parenting from many mothers and from many family court professionals, fathers who want shared parenting often feel they have no choice but to have their children live almost exclusively with their mother. Roughly 60% of moms and 30% of dads hire a lawyer to help them reach an agreement. More than two thirds of all divorces are initiated by women, in part because moms know that are likely to get what they want – to have the kids live almost exclusively with her (Brinig & Allen, 2000). Perhaps this explains why divorce rates declined in those states whose laws were changed to make shared parenting easier for fathers to obtain (Levy, 2007). In any case, even though 90% of divorcing parents reach a legal agreement without going before a judge, this doesn't mean they "freely" choose or are satisfied with the plan they agree to. Of course wealthier fathers have the most money to hire lawyers and are more likely to "win" more shared parenting time (Kelly, Redenbach, & Rinaman, 2005). Even so, those men who were the most involved with their kids during the marriage are the most heartbroken and dissatisfied with the small amount of time they are allowed to live with their kids after the divorce (Madden et al., 2000). Given how difficult it is for most fathers to obtain shared parenting, dads are generally unhappier than moms are with their "agreement" about the parenting time (Bonach et al., 2005; Fabricius et al., 2010).

But isn't our present legal system merely reflecting what most Americans believe – that most kids should live almost exclusively with their mothers after their parents divorce? No. In fact, most Americans say that children should live as equally as possible with both parents as long as they are fit and loving parents (Fabricius et al., 2010; Fathers and Families, 2004). Indeed, an increasing number of divorced parents are agreeing to have their children live more equally in each home. For example, in Arizona (Venohr &

Kaunelis, 2008) and in Washington state (George, 2008), 30%-50% of the divorcing parents agreed to have their kids live with each of them for at least one third or as much as one half of each year. Still, only one country – Australia – has changed its laws so that all divorced parents are legally entitled to live with their children for half of each year, if they so choose. Since this change in 2006, roughly 20% of Australia's children with divorced parents are living equally with both parents and another 15% are living at least 30% of the time with their fathers (Bates, 2008; Parkinson, 2010).

All said and done, there is strong support for shared parenting in our most recent research. Sure, there are trade-offs to grapple with: the benefits of living with both parents versus the inconvenience of living in two homes, the challenges of coparenting versus the “winner take all” single parenting. And yes, there are still die-hard beliefs that need to be set to rest: the belief that one parent has such superior parenting skills that the children must grow up only in that parent's home, the belief that there is a “best” parent who will meet the children's needs – regardless of their age or their changing circumstances - far better than their other parent, the belief that children only benefit from living with both parents when there is no conflict between them. Despite these tradeoffs and challenges, the research is abundantly clear about this: spending only 15-20% of the time with one parent is not in the best interests of children. We can – we must - do better than this.

Considering the research, it's hard to understand why more policy makers, professionals in the family court system, and family members are not in favor of shared parenting (Chadwick, 2002). Taking an optimistic stance, we can assume that too many people are simply unaware of what the research has to say. Taking a more pessimistic stance, we might wonder if the problem resides, not in the failure to disseminate the research, but in two disturbing beliefs that people may not want to fess up to: that men – married or divorced - are inferior to women as parents and that the major contribution fathers need to make to their children – especially after divorce - is money. It's been said that many of us would rather base our decisions on one good soul satisfying emotion than on a hundred facts. Let's hope this doesn't prove to be true in regard to shared parenting.

Reference List

- Ablow, J. (2009). Linking marital conflict and children's adjustment. Journal of Family Psychology, 23, 485-499.
- Adamson, K. & Pasley, K. (2006). Coparenting following divorce. In M. Fine & J. Harvey (Eds.), Handbook of Divorce (pp. 241-262). Mahway, NJ: Erlbaum.
- Afifi, T. (2007). Parental divorce disclosure. Communication Monographs, 74, 78-103.
- Ahrons, C. (2004). We're Still Family. New York: Harper Collins.

Ahrons, C. (2007). Family ties after divorce. Family Process, 46, 53-65.

Amato, P. & Affi, T. (2006). Feeling caught between parents. Journal of Marriage and Family, 58, 222-234.

Amato, P. & Booth, A. (2006). Alone together: How marriage in America is changing. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Amato, P. & Dorius, C. (2010). Divorce and father-child relationships. In M.Lamb (Ed.), Role of the Father in Child Development. New York: Wiley & Sons.

Amato, P. & Gilbraith, J. (2009). Nonresident fathers and children's well being. Journal of Marriage and Family, 61, 557-573.

Aquilino, W. (2005). Family structure and attitudes toward economic support of adult children. Journal of Family Issues, 26, 143-156.

Association of Family and Conciliation Courts (2006). Planning for Shared Parenting Boston: AFCC.

Baker, A. (2007). Adult children of parental alienation syndrome. New York: Norton.

Bartell, D. (2006). Influence of parental divorce on romantic relationships in young adulthood. In M.Fine & J. Harvey (Eds.), Handbook of Divorce. New York: Routledge.

Bates, F. (2008). Australian Family Law in 2006. In B.Atkin & F. Banda (Eds.), International Survey of Family Law Bristol, Great Britain: Jordan Press.

Bauserman, R. (2002). Child adjustment in joint custody versus sole custody. Journal of Family Psychology, 16, 91-102.

Berger, L. (2008). Stability of child physical placements after divorce. Marriage and Family, 70, 273-283.

- Bianchi, S., Robinson, J., & Milkie, M. (2006). Changing Rhythms of the American Family. New York: Sage.
- Blaisure, K. & Geasler, M. (2006). Educational interventions for divorcing parents and their children. In M.Fine & J. Harvey (Eds.), Handbook of Divorce and Relationship Dissolution Mahway, NJ: Erlbaum.
- Bonach, K., Sales, E., & Koeske, G. (2005). Gender differences in coparenting quality. Journal of Divorce and Remarriage, 42, 1-28.
- Brandon, D. (2006). Can four hours make a difference? Journal of Divorce and Remarriage, 62, 171-185.
- Braver, S. (1998). Divorced Dads: Shattering the myths. New York: Putnam.
- Braver, S., Cookston, J., & Cohen, B. (2002). Experiences of family law attorneys with current divorce practice. Family Relations, 51, 325-334.
- Brinig, M. & Allen, R. (2000). These boots are made for walking: Why women divorce. American Law and Economics Review, 2, 126-169.
- Buchanan, C. & Maccoby, E. (1996). Adolescents After Divorce. Cambridge, Ma: Harvard University.
- Buehler, C. (2009). Adolescents' triangulation into parents' marital conflict. Journal of Family Psychology, 23, 167-180.
- Butler, I. (2003). Divorcing children. London: Jessica Kingsley.
- Carlson, M. (2006). Family structure, father involvement and adolescent outcomes. Journal of Marriage and Family, 68, 137-154.

Cashmore, J., Parkinson, P., & Taylor, A. (2008). Overnight stays and children's relationships with parents after divorce. Journal of Family Issues, 29, 707-733.

Chadwick, L. (2002). Absent parents are more than money. Family Issues, 648, 661-665.

Clawar, J. (2003). Children Held Hostage. Washington, DC: American Bar Association.

Coley, R. & Medeiros, B. (2007). Nonresident father involvement and delinquency. Child Development, 78, 132-147.

Cookston, J., Braver, S., & Griffin, W. (2008). Prevention programs for divorced fathers. Family Court Review, 400, 400-500.

Criddle, M. & Scott, M. (2005). Mandatory divorce education and post divorce parental conflict. Journal of Divorce and Remarriage, 62, 99-111.

DeCuzzi, A. & Lamb, M. (2004). Conceptualizing and measuring father involvement. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Demo, D. & Fine, M. (2010). Beyond the average divorce. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Dolgin, K. (1996). Parents disclosure of concerns to adolescent children. Personal Relationships, 3, 159-169.

Dotterweich, D. (2000). Attitudes regarding gender bias in child custody cases. Family and Conciliation Courts Review, 38, 208.

Duck, S. & Wood, J. (2006). Sex and gendered patterns in relational dissolution. In M.Fine & J. Harvey (Eds.), Handbook of Divorce (pp. 169-188). New York: Routledge.

Dunlop, R., Burns, S., & Bermingham, S. (2001). Parent child relations and adolescent self image following divorce. Journal of youth and Adolescence, 30, 117-134.

Dutton, D. (2006). Rethinking Domestic Violence. Vancouver: University of British Columbia.

- Elrod, L. & Spector, R. (2004). A review of the year in family law. Family Law Quarterly, 37, 527-575.
- Emery, R. (2004). The truth about children and divorce. New York: Viking.
- Fabricius, W. & Braver, S. (2003). Non child support expenditures on children by nonresidential divorced fathers. Family Court Review, 41, 70.
- Fabricius, W., Braver, S., Diaz, P., & Schenck, C. (2010). Links to family relationships and well being after divorce. In M.Lamb (Ed.), Role of the Father in Child Development. New York: John Wiley & Sons.
- Fabricius, W. & Luecken, L. (2007). Postdivorce living arrangements, parent conflict and physical health for children of divorce. Journal of Family Psychology, 21, 195-205.
- Fabricus, W. (2003). Listening to children of divorce. Family Relations, 52, 385-396.
- Fathers and Families (2004). Public opinion on shared parenting Boston: Fathers & Families.
- Fine, M. & Pei, F. (2005). Evaluation of a parenting program for divorcing parents. Journal of Divorce and Remarriage, 62, 1-23.
- Finley, G. & Schwartz, S. (2007). Father involvement and young adult outcomes. Family Court Review, 45, 573-587.
- Frank, H. (2004). Marital status, conflict and post divorce predictors. Journal of Divorce and Remarriage, 39, 105-124.
- Frieman, B. (2007). Helping professionals understand challenges of noncustodial parents. Journal of Divorce and Remarriage, 39, 167-173.
- Garber, B. (2004). Coparenting intervention with highly conflicted parents. Professional Psychology, 35, 55-64.

- Garber, B. (2007). Visitation resistance and parental divorce. Family Court Review, 45, 588-599.
- Gaspar, J. (2009). Coparenting in intact and divorced families. Journal of Divorce and Remarriage, 44, 272-290.
- George, T. (2008). Residential Time Summary Reports Olympia, WA: Washington State Center for Court Research.
- Harper, C. & McLanahan, S. (2004). Father absence and youth incarceration. Journal of Research on Adolescence, 14, 369-397.
- Harper, S. & Fine, M. (2006). Noncustodial fathers interactions with children. Fathering, 4, 286-311.
- Harvey, J. & Fine, M. (2004). Children of Divorce. Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.
- Hetherington, M. & Kelly, J. (2002). For better or worse: Divorce reconsidered. New York: Norton.
- Hilton, J. & Frye, K. (2004). Psychological adjustment among divorced custodial parents. Journal of Divorce & Remarriage, 41, 30.
- Hoffmann, J. (2002). Community context of family structure and adolescent drug use. Journal of Marriage and Family, 64, 314-330.
- Jaffe, P. & et al (2008). Custody disputes involving allegations of domestic violence. Family Court Review, 46, 500-522.
- Jennings, M. & Howe, N. (2001). Siblings perceptions of their parents' divorce. Journal of Divorce and Remarriage, 35, 91-106.
- Jeynes, W. (2001). Divorce and children's sexual attitudes and behavior. Journal of Divorce and Remarriage, 35, 115-133.

Johnston, J. (2005). Substantiating allegations of abuse in custody cases . Family Court Review 283-294.

Jurkovic, G., Thirkield, A., & Morrell, R. (2001). Parentification of adult children of divorce. Journal of youth and Adolescence, 30, 245-257.

Kelly, J. (2007). Children's living arrangements following divorce. Family Process, 46, 35-52.

Kelly, J. & Johnston, J. (2005). Empirical and ethical problems with custody recommendations. Family Court Review, 43.

Kelly, R., Redenbach, L., & Rinaman, W. (2005). Determinants of custody arrangements in a national sample. American Journal of Family Law, 19, 25-43.

King, V., Harris, K., & Heard, H. (2004). Racial diversity in nonresident father involvement. Journal of Marriage and the Family, 66, 1-21.

King, V. & Soboleski, D. (2006). Nonresident fathers' contributions to adolescent well-being. Journal of Marriage and Family, 68, 537-557.

Knox, D., Zusman, M., & DeCuzzi, A. (2004). Effects of divorce on relationships with parents. College Student Journal, 38, 597-601.

Koerner, A. & et al (2004). Sensitive mother to adolescent disclosures after divorce. Journal of Family Psychology, 18, 46-57.

Koerner, S., Kenyon, D., & Rankin, A. (2006). Growing up faster? Journal of Divorce & Remarriage, 45, 25-41.

Krampe, E. & Newton, R. (2006). Father Presence Questionnaire. Fathering, 4, 159-189.

- Kruk, E. (2008). Child custody, access and parental responsibility Guelph, Canada: Father Involvement Research Alliance.
- Lamb, M. (2007). Approximation rule misses the target. Child Development Perspectives, 1, 135-137.
- Laumann, L. & Emery, R. (2000). Distress among young adults from divorced families. Journal of Family Psychology, 14, 671-687.
- Lebow, J. & Rekart, K. (2007). Family therapy for high conflict divorce. Family Process, 46, 79-91.
- Lee, M. (2002). Children's adjustment in maternal and dual residence arrangements. Journal of Family Issues, 23, 671-687.
- Lerner, R. (2004). Family structure, father closeness, drug use and delinquency Gaithersburg, MD: National Fatherhood Initiative.
- Leudemann, M. (2006). Mothers' discussions with daughters following divorce. Journal of Divorce & Remarriage, 46, 29-55.
- Levy, D. (2007). Joint custody and divorce rates Washington, DC: Children's Rights Council.
- Maccoby, E. & Mnookin, R. (1992). Dividing the Child. Cambridge: Harvard University.
- Madden, D. & Leonard, S. (2002). Perceptions of parenting after divorce. Family Relations 37-45.
- Madden, D. & Leonard, S. (2000). Fathers' involvement in coparental interaction after divorce. Family Relations, 49, 311-318.
- Markham, M., Ganong, L., & Coleman, M. (2007). Mothers' cooperation in coparental relationships. Family Relations, 56, 369-377.
- Marquardt, E. (2005). Between two worlds: Inner lives of children of divorce. New York: Crown.

Menning, C. (2006). Nonresident fathering and school failure . Journal of Family Issues, 27, 1356-1382.

Menning, C. L. & Stewart, S. D. (2008). Nonresident father involvement and adolescent weight. Journal of Family Issues, 29, 1673-1700.

Michael, K., Torres, A., & Seemann, E. (2008). Adolescents' health habits and exposure to interparental conflict. Journal of Divorce and Remarriage, 48, 155-174.

Milke, M. (2004). The time squeeze. Journal of Marriage and Family, 66, 739-761.

Morris, M. & West, C. (2001). Post divorce conflict and avoidance of intimacy. Journal of Divorce and Remarriage, 35, 93-105.

Nathanson, P. & Young, K. (2006). Legalizing Misandry: From public shame to systemic discrimination against men. Ithaca, NY: McGill Queen's University.

Nepomnyaschy, L. (2007). Child support and father contact. Demography, 44, 93-112.

Nielsen, L. (1999). Demeaning, demoralizing and disenfranchising divorced dads. Journal of Divorce and Remarriage, 31, 139-177.

Nielsen, L. (2006). College daughters' relationships with their fathers: A fifteen year study. College Student Journal, 54, 16-30.

Nielsen, L. (2008). Between Fathers and Daughters: Enriching and Rebuilding Your Adult Relationship. Nashville: Turner Publishing.

Parkinson, P., Cashmore, J., & Single, J. (2005). Adolescents' views on the fairness of parent arrangements after separation. Family Court Review, 43, 430-445.

Parkinson, P. (2010). Shared parenting in Australia. In M.Lamb (Ed.), Role of the Father in Child Development. New York: Wiley & Sons.

- Peters, H. & et al (2004). Child support and father-child contact. Review of Economics of the Household, 2, 255-274.
- Peters, B. & Ehrenberg, M. (2008). Influence of divorce on father child relationships. Journal of Divorce & Remarriage, 49, 78-109.
- Platt, R. & et al (2008). Parental conflict and infidelity as predictors of adult children's attachment style and infidelity. American Journal of Family Therapy, 36, 149-161.
- Pruett, M., Insabellla, G., & Gustafson, K. (2005). Collaborative divorce project. Family Court Review, 43, 38-51.
- Reifman, A. (2001). Children of divorce in the 1990s: A meta-analysis. Journal of Divorce & Remarriage, 36, 27-36.
- Riggs, S. (2005). Is the approximation rule in the child's best interests? Family Court Review, 43, 481-493.
- Rye, M. & et al (2004). Forgiveness of an ex-spouse. Journal of Divorce & Remarriage, 41, 31-51.
- Sandler, I., Miles, J., Cookston, J., & Braver, S. (2008). Effects of parenting in high and low conflict divorces. Family Court Review, 46, 282-296.
- Sbarra, D. & Emery, R. (2006). Grief and adaptation in divorce mediation. In M.Fine & J. Harvey (Eds.), Handbook of Divorce (pp. 553-574). New York: Routledge.
- Schaick, K. & Stolberg, A. (2001). Paternal involvement and young adults' intimate relationships. Journal of Divorce and Remarriage, 36, 99-121.
- Schwartz, S. & Finley, G. (2009). Mothering, fathering and divorce. Family Court Review, 47, 506-522.

Scott, M., Booth, A., & King, V. (2007). Postdivorce father-adolescent closeness. Journal of Marriage and Family, 69, 1194-1209.

Shelton, K. (2008). Interparental conflict, negative parenting, and children's adjustment. Journal of Family Psychology, 22, 712-724.

Silverberg, S. (2004). Sensitive mother to adolescent disclosures after divorce. Journal of Family Psychology, 18, 46-57.

Silverstein, M. & et al (2002). Reciprocity in parent child relations over the adult life course. Journal of Gerontology, 57, 3-13.

Smith, A. (2003). Re-thinking children's involvement in decision making. Family Law Journal, 259, 259-266.

Spillman, J., Deschamps, H., & Crews, J. (2004). Perspectives on nonresidential paternal involvement: A Literature review. The Family Journal, 12, 263-270.

Stamps, K., Booth, A., & King, V. (2009). Adolescents with nonresident fathers: Are daughters more disadvantaged than sons? Journal of Marriage and the Family, 71, 650-662.

Stamps, L. (2002). Maternal preference in child custody decisions. Journal of Divorce and Remarriage, 37, 1-12.

Stewart, S. (2003). Nonresident parenting and adolescent adjustment. Journal of Family Issues, 24, 217-244.

Stone, G. (2006). Qualitative evaluation of parent education programs for divorced parents. Journal of Divorce and Remarriage, 62, 25-40.

Stone, G. & Dudley, J. (2006). Fathering at risk: Helping nonresidential fathers. Harriman, Tn.: Men's Studies Press.

- Stroufe, L. (2005). Attachment and development. Attachment and Human Development, 7, 349-367.
- Thocme, N. & Bala, N. (2005). False allegations of abuse when parents separate. Child Abuse and Neglect, 29, 1333-1345.
- Titelman, P. (2007). Triangles: Bowen Family Systems Perspectives. New York: Haworth.
- Toews, M. & McKenry, P. (2007). Predictors of parenting cooperation after divorce. Journal of Divorce and Remarriage, 42, 57-73.
- Troxel, W. & Mathews, K. (2004). Costs of marital conflict and divorce to children's physical health. Clinical Child and Family Psychology Review, 7, 29-57.
- Venohr, J. & Kaunelis, R. (2008). Child support guidelines. Family Court Review, 43, 415-428.
- Wallerstein, J. & Blakeslee, S. (2004). What about the kids? Hyperion.
- Warshak, R. (2007). Punching the parenting time clock. Family Court Review, 45, 600-619.
- Warshak, R. (2010). Divorce Poison. New York: Regan Books.
- Western, B., Nelson, T., & Piercy, K. (2002). Disclosure of divorce to children. Contemporary Family Theory, 24, 525-542.
- Whitbeck, L., Hoyt, D., & Hutchinson, M. (1994). Early family relationships and intergenerational solidarity. Journal of Gerontology, 49, 85-94.
- Williams, G. (2007). Judicial response to joint custody statutes Las Vegas: Law and Society Conference.
- Zimmerman, J. & Thayer, E. (2003). Adult Children of Divorce. New Harbinger.