## Introduction

**Factors associated with successful shared parenting following family dissolution**

Sanford Braver  
Michael E. Lamb  
Ned Holstein

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**Effects Of Separation On Infant- And Toddler-Parent Attachments**

Pamela S. Ludolph

Abstract: Infants and toddlers form critical attachments to both their mothers and fathers if the parent is caring and available to the child with regularity. Given that one secure attachment has been shown to promote healthy development in important ways, and that it remains unknown at birth which parent will best generate that attachment, it is wise to provide each parent enough time with the child to foster attachment, including children whose parents do not live together. Although babies may be temporarily stressed by the early introduction of an unfamiliar parent, there is little likelihood of lasting harm if there is screening for violence and serious mental illness in parents who are of concern, and if the unfamiliar parent is introduced with sensitivity.

Keywords: Divorce, separation, infancy, early childhood, parenting plans

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**Does shared parenting by separated parents affect the adjustment of young children?**

Michael E Lamb

Abstract: Changing family roles and evidence that most infants form attachment relationships with both of their parents have sparked a debate about parenting arrangements when the parents of infants and toddlers separate. Misunderstanding of attachment theory and the available
empirical evidence has obscured rather than clarified evidence-based decision-making. In this report, the author closely examines the five studies most frequently referenced in this context and shows what they do and do not tell us about the ways in which children’s adjustment can be promoted when their parents separate. Consistent with attachment theory, the evidence suggests that children benefit when parenting plans allow them to maintain meaningful and positive relationships with both of their parents.

Keywords: Divorce, separation, infancy, early childhood, parenting plans

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Effects Of Parental Separation On Children’s Adjustment

Quantity versus Quality of Nonresident Father Involvement: Deconstructing the Argument that Quantity Doesn’t Matter

Kari Adamsons

Abstract: Numerous studies have examined the impact of nonresident fathers on the well-being of their children. Two meta-analyses have been conducted of this literature, Amato and Gilbreth (1999) and Adamsons and Johnson (2013), with both concluding that when nonresident fathers are involved with their children in positive ways, their children benefit substantially; however, both also noted that the amount of nonresident father contact, in and of itself, was not associated with children’s well-being. Some have taken the nonsignificant associations between contact and child well-being as an argument against joint physical custody. This paper examines why such reasoning is flawed, and why both quality and quantity of nonresident father involvement are necessary to consider when wanting to promote the well-being of children.

Keywords: nonresident fathers, father involvement, contact, child well-being, joint physical custody

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Joint versus Sole Physical Custody: Outcomes for Children in 54 Studies Independent of Income and Parental Conflict

Linda Nielsen

Abstract: Is joint physical custody (JPC) linked to any better or worse outcomes for children than sole physical custody (SPC) after considering family income and parental conflict? In the 60 studies published in English in academic journals or in government reports, 33 studies found that JPC children had better outcomes on all of the measures of behavioral, emotional, physical, and academic well-being and relationships with parents and grandparents. In 15 studies JPC children had equal outcomes on some measures and better outcomes on others compared to SPC children.
In 6 studies JPC and SPC children were equal on all measures. In 6 studies JPC children were worse on one of the measures than SPC children, but equal or better on all other measures. In the 42 studies that considered family income, JPC children had better outcomes on all measures in 25 studies, equal to better outcomes in 9 studies, equal outcomes in 4 studies, and worse outcomes on one measure but equal or better outcomes on other measures in 4 studies. In the 36 studies that included parental conflict, JPC children had better outcomes on all measures in 18 studies, equal to better outcomes in 11 studies, equal outcomes in 3 studies, and worse outcomes on one measure but equal or better outcomes on other measures in 4 studies. In sum, independent of family income or parental conflict, JPC is linked to better outcomes for children.

Keywords: Parenting Issues, Child Custody

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**Relocation Disputes**

*Parental Gatekeeping Forensic Model and Child Custody Evaluation: Social Capital and Application to Relocation Disputes*

William G. Austin
Sol Rappaport

Abstract: The parental gatekeeping, forensic evaluation model for child custody evaluators and other family court practitioners is presented. Gatekeeping refers to the ability of each parent to support the other parent-child relationships. The gatekeeping concept represents a common best interest statutory factor. Patterns or subtypes of gatekeeping are defined: facilitative, restrictive, and protective. A justification analysis is required when a parent is not supportive and/or restrictive on the other parent’s access to the child. The restrictive parent needs to identify the reasons for being restrictive/protective and show the nature of the harm. Relevant research is reviewed on joint parental involvement and gatekeeping. The gatekeeping model is applied to the context of relocation disputes. Relocation is framed as restrictive gatekeeping and the child custody relocation analysis is presented as a justification analysis in terms of the facts, context, reasons for moving, advantages/disadvantages, and legal factors that need to be assessed and considered.

Keywords: Gatekeeping, Divorce, Restrictive, Facilitative, Protective, Custody, Relocation, Forensic

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*Relocation and the Indissolubility of Parenthood*

Patrick Parkinson
Judith Cashmore
Abstract: This article is based upon the findings of a five-year prospective longitudinal study of relocation disputes in Australia, involving interviews with 80 parents and 33 children in 70 families. In the five years following the relocation dispute, much changed for some of these families. A few mothers left without their children; several mothers returned to the original location; some fathers followed. There were also changes in some custody arrangements. The mothers who moved were not surprisingly satisfied with the outcome; but even mothers who were not allowed to move mostly showed greater improvements in stress levels and mental health than fathers over the five-year period, even if the fathers successfully opposed the move. Several mothers adapted to staying if they could see the benefit to their children. All children who moved adapted to the new location and made new friends; but those who had close relationships with their father found it very hard to be a long distance from him. Drawing upon these interviews, it is argued that decision-making in relocation cases must be resolutely child-centred. It cannot be based upon adults’ rights. Children usually benefit from a continuing relationship with a non-resident parent who wants to be involved in their lives. In the adjudication of relocation disputes, careful attention is needed to how close and how developmentally important the child’s relationship is with their non-resident parent. Consideration must also be given to whether the non-resident parent can move to the preferred location of the primary caregiver.

Keywords: Family law – divorce – children – relocation – mobility – moving away – children’s views – court decisions

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