

Submission No: 322

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Secretary

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2nd August '03

Committee Secretary
Standing Committee on Family and Community Affairs
House of Representatives
Parliament House
Canberra. A.C.T. 2600

Dear Sir/Madam,

I wish to make the following comments in support of the case for "Shared Parenting" after divorce/separation.

Shared Parenting equally acknowledges the two people who are responsible for the very existence of the child/children. It acknowledges the equal love that both parents have for the child/children, and the equal responsibilities and rolls that each parent has, and wants to play, in the lives of their child/children.

Shared Parenting acknowledges that the parents are equally capable of providing for and caring for the child/children, and they are equally entitled to share in the joy that only children can give.

Shared Parenting would end much of the bitter fighting that occurs prior to and long after the legal profession and Family Court become involved. It would end the perception of one gender that the Family Court and system are biased against them, and hopefully, reduce their high suicide rate.

Shared Parenting would end the ill feelings and disputes that often occur among the extended families where one family has almost exclusive contact with the child/children whilst the other family has little contact, and often ends up being completely alienated. Statistics suggest 40%.

The decision to end a marriage/relationship is often made by one parent only, and often against the wishes of their own extended family. Their decision often affects 30 to 40 people, from 3 or 4 generations, and sadly it is their own child/children who are worst affected.

Shared Parenting would prevent children from being used to advantage, and in some cases remove the incentive for ending a marriage/relationship.

Shared Parenting, in treating Maternal and Paternal Families equally and acknowledging that they both have an equally important roll to play in the lives of the children, cannot be seen to be biased, and also will be seen as acting in the best interests of all involved, for a decision that all, or the vast majority, find fair and acceptable is the best possible outcome in such situations, and any decision that is in the best interest of all involved will ultimately, also prove to be in the best interest of the child/children.

Unless a parent chooses not to have Shared Parenting, or if it is proven that a parent will harm a child, then there can be no justification for Shared Parenting not being the norm.

To deny a parent Shared Parenting without just cause, goes against all that we expect, and are entitled to, under our democratic, legal, and parental systems, that are the foundation of our society.

There is a great deal more that I could say on this subject, as I have given it a great deal of thought, and I have formed some strong opinions on this subject.

I would gladly discuss my views on this subject, and I would be prepared to travel to Canberra to discuss the subject.

Yours sincerely
Peter Harrison.