

House of Representatives Standing Committee
on Family and Community Affairs

Submission No: 1427

Date Received: 7-8-03

Secretary: _____

[REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, 7 August 2003 3:50 PM

To: Committee, FCA (REPS)

Subject: Child Custody Arrangements

Committee Secretary,

Asa Grandparent of children whose parents are separated, I would just like to say:

The most important factor in all of this is The Children, and also to make both parents adhere to the Court Orders as set out. If these orders were followed exactly as they say on paper, which both parents agreed to at the time of the court appearance, there wouldn't be half as many complaining parents. It always becomes spiteful after a divorce/separation and whom ever becomes the Main Carer of the children does anything possible to "get back" at the other parent. eg: The normal procedure is to award Shared Custody. Both parents have them alternate weekends, and half the school holidays, with both parents being allowed to see them for a specified amount of time on birthdays and special occasions. The Mother is usually awarded as the main carer, and the father is allowed to go to school activities and receive school reports etc. and phone the children at certain times allotted.

As in our case (the grandparents) we try not to monopolise our grandchildren as the average time he gets to see his children is once a month for Saturday and Sunday. I pick them up so as we can see them for a while, but their Aunties, Uncles and Great Grandparent do not see them, maybe 3 or 4 times a year. The Orders are in place and have been for some time.

[REDACTED] He has paid his bill for her and he also pays maintenance for the children. You wouldn't believe some of the things the children tell us that happens, but no one cares, childrens services say that it is the way it is.

I feel an appropriate way to overcome many of these problems, especially for the parents who live within say Two Hours drive of each other, would be to (1 hour to middle)

- a) Choose a school half way between both parents
- b) Each parent has the children 12 days at a time (whatever is agreed as fair)
- c) That they be picked up and dropped off at school (by arranged persons)
- d) That Birthdays are celebrated whenever you have them, it is great they have 2 parties
- e) Christmas time for Christmas Day is arranged before hand as is any other special days, whether for family or friends etc.
- f) Either the first half or second half of school holidays stay the same unless both parents agree to change.
- g) The Parent receiving maintenance must show receipts for same for the Children, not to pay off his or her car or other goodies.

I make these comments as a concerned Grandparent, something has to be done, for the health and wellbeing of these children, as most of them are used as poms for the parents spitefulness, whether they abuse them or just neglect them or turn them against the other parent. At least if there is substantial custody for several days the Aunts, Uncles, Grandparents Cousins etc. can fit in some time to see them, but 2 days a month (supposed to be every second weekend) doesn't even give that parent enough time with them for anything.

I am available for any further comments or input. I hope I haven't taken up too much of your time but this is very special to me as they will be grown up too quickly and never know this side of the family.

Yours faithfully