

Committee Secretary
Standing Committee on Family and Community Affairs
Dept. of the House of Representatives
Parliament House

Canberra ACT 2600

Submission

Inquiry into custody arrangements in the event of family separation.

House of Representatives Standing Committee on Family and Community Affairs
Submission No: 534
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Secretary:

Terms of reference (a) (I) The perceived ideal of children having equal time with each parent may not be practical and in fact contribute to destabilisation. A primary home base from which to attend school, sport socialise and feel grounded is important but the children should have ready access to either parent who have the responsibility to attend to the children's physical, emotional, social and spiritual needs.

(II) It must be presumed a birth right of all children to have contact with their grandparents in particular but also their extended family and significant others. Any denial of this right by either parent without good cause, should be considered akin to emotional abuse and carry a penalty enforceable by law.

(b) There needs to be urgent amendments to the existing child support formula as it is divisive and grossly unfair to the paying parent. It does not consider the paying (non custodial) parents need to re establish themselves following family separation nor the cost of providing and maintaining a living environment appropriate for the children which will incur similar financial outlay to that of the custodial parent. Neither does it reflect the cost of maintaining the children while on access visits.

In addition, parents who do not have regular access to their children due to circumstances where they are geographically separated by considerable distance are similarly disadvantaged in that they must show that they have spent what equates to approximately 25% of what they have already paid in child support in having contact with their children and under the present structure, still pay full child support payments to the payee during the time they are maintaining and providing for the children on such visits. This in many cases makes it financially difficult if not impossible for many paying parents to have access to their children and vice versa.

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