

House of Representatives Standing Committee
on Family and Community Affairs

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RE INQUIRY INTO CHILD CUSTODY ARRANGEMENT

I write with some concern over
the proposed change to Child Custody
arrangements.

I urge you to consider carefully
all aspects of responsibility towards the
safe and happy upbringing of children.

All children have the right to a
safe and happy & fulfilled childhood.
All of us get one chance and one
chance only to live through our
childhood, and it is imperative that
childhood be a happy, balanced and
ordered one, in order for children
to grow into mature, decent, balanced
adults.

When both parents really have the
interest of their children at heart they
will consider the best possible
arrangements for their children but
sadly there are others who simply use
their children as a tool to use to rehaul

their partner and get what they consider their just revenge.

There are two sides to every story, but in the case of child custody or access arrangements there are three sides to the story and sadly the third side is rarely taken into consideration.

A few children might benefit from a 50/50 arrangement but for the majority of children this arrangement could bring nothing but bewilderment, fear and resentment and indeed in many cases hatred towards the parents.

There are so many children forced to go on access visits who dread each visit and are pulled away by the parent screaming and crying. They fret the visit away and then take several days to settle down again, only to face the next access visit. I imagine the dread these children will feel and the loneliness and fear the separation of 50/50 Custody will cause.

Children by the age of 9 or 10 have formed firm friendships at school, have joined sports teams, and are seriously undertaking chosen extra curriculum activities as music, dancing, drama etc. They love to compete. Their routine has been established, I imagine the havoc separation will cause it

these activities are continually interrupted most children feel true resentment over having to give up these activities for access visits.

There are children who suffer from chronic health problems such as diabetes, asthma, arthritis, eczema etc which are definitely worsened by stress. These children need regularity and great care must be taken to maintain daily treatment - Consider the stress these children would endure if separated from their regular care against their will.

What of children who have been subjected to abuse, be it physical, psychological, or sexual. These children must be listened to and placed in the environment that is completely safe and away from the abusive parent. These children must be given an opportunity to tell their story and to reveal their wishes & for their wishes to be taken into consideration else further abuse occur.

The interests of the children should be paramount in this decision not the emotional needs or demands of the parents.

There has been much said, mainly by the fathers over maintenance payments. Children do not ask to be held and

whether they live with one parent or the other & both parents having brought the child into this world surely have the responsibility of paying for that child's existence. It is indeed sickening to hear the complaints over a few dollars whilst the child is caught up in the middle of such resentment. A child is not a commodity.

If the rule applies that payment should be made according to hours of access, then the rule, if fair, should apply equally to those parents working and paying no maintenance. No access should be granted, as in actual fact that parent has relinquished his responsibility towards the child and abandoned the child to the sole care of the other parent.

Please consider the welfare and happiness of the children and not let emotion rule in this decision. Our children are the future, their own and ours, not commodities to be sold to the highest bidder.

W. Lyles