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**Forbes, Bev (REPS)**

**From:** George, Jennie (MP)  
**Sent:** Tuesday, 2 September 2003 1:24 PM  
**To:** Forbes, Bev (REPS)  
**Subject:** FW: research into shared parenting

Hi Bev,

Jennie suggested that it might be worthwhile for the Committee to contact Jennifer Neoh.

Regards,

Josh.

-----Original Message-----

**From:** Jennifer Neoh [mailto:.....]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, 2 September 2003 10:27 AM  
**To:** George, Jennie (MP)  
**Subject:** research into shared parenting

Dear Ms George

My name is Jennifer Neoh and I am currently enrolled in a Doctor of Clinical Psychology Degree at Deakin University in Burwood Melbourne. I note that you are a member of the Committee into the enquiry into joint custody arrangements in the event of family separation and have enclosed a synopsis of my research for your interest.

I am in the second year of research into children's perspective of shared parenting by interviewing shared parents and children; parents and children with more conventional contact and residence arrangements and comparing them with the perspectives of intact families.

The research is based on the following rationale:  
The discrepancy between the Family Courts focus on "children's best interests" and the rights of children and the failure to canvas children's perspective of shared parenting in research.

I have also found with a review of case law that the Family Court considers a lack of conflict, close geographical proximity, a cooperative parenting style and a consideration of the effects of repartnering as crucial to the success of shared parenting. However research into these factors, which is generally on separated parents and not shared parents in particular, is ambiguous at best. For example, a definition of conflictual parents is taken as anything from physical violence between parents to parents who litigate. Most of this research is also North American. I find it astounding that these factors have such a tenuous foundation in research, yet underpin so much of Family Law practice. My initial application to the Family Court was denied however I have found that in applying directly to the community that shared parenting after separation is relatively widely accepted.

I am looking at parents' and children's perspective of shared parenting and have found distinct groups of shared parents and children who live with shared parenting. I have not finished data collection at this time as I hope to get a wide a sample as possible.

If you are interested in the results of my work or wish to ask any further questions, please contact me at this email address or telephone ..... or a message service .....

Thank you  
Jennifer Neoh