

Submission No: 1567

Date Received: 4-9-03

Secretary:

A FATHERS DAY PRESENT

Two weeks ago my oldest son of 14 years had 3 school projects to prepare and he asked his mother if he could come over to my place for a week, so that I could assist him in putting them together. He organised it with his mother and asked me to pick him up from school and he stayed for the week.

My youngest son of 10 years rang me last night and asked me if he could come over after school so that I could help him with a school project, which he is required to submit by Friday of this week. He said "Dad I might stay over for the night" and I told him "to work it out with his mother and get back to me". He rang me soon afterwards and asked if I could pick him up from school on Tuesday afternoon and advised me that he was going to stay for the whole week until Sunday.

What this is teaching me is that the kids in some instances are better placed to work out and make some of the important decisions that are in their best interests. If this is the case then we should facilitate and encourage this by not simply providing a "presumption of rights" for parents but providing a "certainty of the children rights".

In the 70's we handed over the fundamental rights of the parents to the discretion of the Family Court who by application consistently used the 80/20 and 70/30 rule as far as access, custody and property was concerned in favour of the mother to the detriment of the best interests of the children.

If the rights of all the parties are simply and clearly spelt out so that they can not be misconstrued, then in my view all of the parties will work better together in giving the children what they deserve and are entitled to and at the same time getting what we expect from them as parents, grandparents or carers.

I've told my wife that when the boys ask her what they should get me for fathers day, tell them to forget the socks, hankies, undies and light beer this year and tell them I would like a body board. I have had my fathers day present this year, so guess who gets the body board and yes it will be a squabble between the three of them.



Michael L Niddrie
2 September 2003