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Committee Secretary
Standing Committee on Family and Community Affairs
Child Custody Arrangements Inquiry
Department of the house of representatives
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This is not a question of boys, fathers and men's groups. This is a question of childcare. How is it that such a fundamental issue as this should turn into a battle of the sexes?

The question seems so predominantly simple. Which of the parents has been the primary caregiver? Whoever took on this role should continue it through to a time when the child is naturally looking for further separation.

Even in a harmonious home a child will gravitate to a main care-giver. That is the person who can supply and fulfill his needs for security and support on a continuous basis. The resulting confidence obtained from having this security then allows the child to spread his love and relationships from primary care-giver to family, family to extended family, extended family to friends and those outside the home, and so on.

To me it seems that the real question is how much contact with the other partner will provide the child with love and security in an emotionally optimal range, and not leave him feeling vulnerable.

I don't know that there was ever such a thing as 50/50 parenting, even in an unbroken home. Rather it is a natural transgression of emotion that allows a child to gradually increase his support persons in an ever widening circle.

I think 50/50 parenting of a very young child is an enormous mistake. It seems apparant that there needs to be a prompt and intense study done into the natural progression of degrees of separation in children. In this way shared parenting may more closely emulate the emotional shift that occurs in children naturally, allowing them the gradual progression of time away from the primary care-giver in a way that is non-threatening for them.

I think it is crucial to remember that even though relationships with the child may vary in terms of the amount of time spent with them at a given age, it does not mean that that relationship is less important to the child. Rather it is a shift in emotional maturity, and should be acknowledged as such. Isn't the point of this whole debate that we are looking to do the best to protect our childrens emotional health, not just that of their parents.



Danielle Norris

Queensland

Age 36

Status: Married w/ 2 children (aged 5 and 7)

e.mail: 