

Submission No. 399

Date Received: 7-8-03

Secretary

I am in receipt of the Parenting Payment Single as I am the mother of two children from two relationships in the past.

I am dismayed at the stance that the Prime Minister and the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs in relation to the shared care of children.

I am writing this submission to question how the proposal of shared care would work given my experience of the Family Law procedure.

For example:-

The father of my youngest daughter did not want to have any contact with myself prior to the birth or with my daughter after she was born. It was not until he was required to pay child support that he began Family Law proceedings.

During this process I was subjected to defamation, stalking, verbal abuse and physical abuse resulting in restraining orders being issued against my youngest daughter's father.

I would like to know how shared care arrangements would work given the past experiences combined with the physical distance involved between residences.

After a long and painful Court process and agreements being made the father constantly does not adhere to the orders as agreed.

The father of my oldest daughter has not paid regular maintenance and is currently in arrears of approximately \$9,500. He works at sea for eight months of the year. How would Shared Care work in this situation?

Organisations such as Dads in Distress with media coverage and apparent support from the Government for these organizations has a detrimental effect on me personally, making me feel insecure as to the status of the residency of my children.

I consider that I am a good mother with the best interests of my children at heart. I struggle constantly to other Government Agencies in relation to Family Payments and Child Support. I have proved my competency as a parent compared with the childrens' fathers and their lack of responsibility and interest in the rearing of their children.

I strongly oppose the proposed changes that will facilitate Shared Care of children after relationship breakdown as I feel it would not be in the best interest of my children.

7/8/03