



Myths and Truths about Shared Parenting

Myth

Truth

<p>Shared parenting doesn't work when parents are in conflict with each other.</p>	<p>The quality of the parent child relationship is a better predictor of children's long-term outcomes than coparenting conflict. Even when there is conflict between parents, shared-custody arrangements are better for children than sole-custody arrangements on all measures of behavioral, emotional, physical, and academic well-being and are related to children having better relationships with their parents and grandparents. The only exceptions to this are situations where children are weaponized to participate in the parental conflict and are psychologically and emotionally manipulated to reject one parent and idealize the other. Fabricius; Leucken, (2007); Mahrer, O'Hara, Sandler, Wolchik, (2018); Nielsen, (2018) Harmon, Matthewson, & Baker, (2022); Fabricius & Suh, (2017)</p>
<p>Shared parenting isn't appropriate for infants and toddlers.</p>	<p>Strong, healthy parent child relationships need consistent and frequent contact including daytime and nighttime caregiving. Young children develop primary attachments to more than just one person. There is no scientific support that young children are harmed by overnights with their fathers. There is no compelling evidence that young children benefit from overnight restrictions with parents who are loving, and attentive. Restricting infants and toddlers from overnights with loving parents is inconsistent with what we know about the development of meaningful parent-child relationships in the first years of life . There is no scientific support that young children's overnighting with their father interferes in their attachment with their mother. Warshak, R. (2014 & 2018); Nielsen, L. 2014</p>
<p>Shared parenting increases parental conflict.</p>	<p>There is no scientific support that shared parenting plans increase parental conflict. Parents with joint physical custody do not generally have significantly less conflict or more cooperative relationships than parents with sole physical custody. Neilson, L. (2017) (2018)</p>
<p>Separated parenting should follow the pre-separation pattern of parenting.</p>	<p>Children whose parents have joint legal and physical custody demonstrate better adjustment, across several domains including family relationships, behavioral adjustment, emotional well-being, and academic achievement, than children who remain in the sole custody of one parent. Approximately 85% of children say they wanted more time with their fathers after divorce (Emery, R. 2004; Fabricius, W. 2003). Parenting roles often change after separation and divorce because the parents must delegate their time between work and parenting differently in a single parent home. There are many changes to which children must adapt after separation. While gradual transitions can be better for children in some cases, the experience of one parent taking on more parenting responsibilities and another pursuing career activities can provide for more enriching experiences with each parent. Emery, R. (2004); Fabricius, W. (2003); Bauserman, R. (2002)</p>
<p>Shared parenting is a "one size fits all" arrangement.</p>	<p>Shared parenting is an extremely flexible approach to separated parenting. There are many different equal shared parenting schedules to fit the needs of different families. Research supports schedules tailored to the ages of children with shorter exchange periods for younger children. Still, an equal shared parenting schedule isn't appropriate in all cases, which is why presumptions in favor of it must be rebuttable. There is no scientific support for the presumptions that courts use now that there should be a primary parent and unequal parenting schedule. The science actually shows that the closer we get to equal parenting the better - absent extraordinary circumstances but it is open to argument.</p>
<p>Shared parenting leaves children vulnerable to abuse</p>	<p>There is no scientific evidence to support this statement. Shared parenting laws are rebuttable when this type of custody plan is not in the child's best interest, when there is a demonstrated history of family violence. It still remains a judge's discretion whether to rebut a presumption of shared parenting or not</p>

	based on each particular family. HHS reports show a decrease in family violence for states that have enacted shared parenting laws. Fabricius, W. (2020)
Presumptions of shared parenting have been tried and were found unsuccessful.	There are no examples in which presumptive shared parenting legislations were reversed because of unsuccessful outcomes. Brian is not aware of any state that has repealed a shared parenting law. Maybe Australia - 2018 Child Custody article by Parkinson explains what happened. Don says there is a study of the popularity of the Kentucky shared parenting law and will forward bc it was very popular. I will research Don's California example.
There should be no legal presumptions about parenting time.	Legal presumptions of equal shared parenting provide parents and children with assurances that their relationship will be protected. Young adults who were raised by divorced parents wish that they had more equal parenting time with both their parents. Fabricius,W. (2003); Fabricius, W. (2020)

Annotated References

Reference. General findings/conclusions

Bauserman, R. (2002) <i>Journal of Family Psychology</i> Copyright 2002 by the American Psychological Association, Inc. 2002, Vol. 16, No. 1, 91-102 0893-3200/02/\$5.00 DOI: 10.1037//0893-3200.16.1.91	A meta-analysis of 33 studies compared adjustment between children being raised in sole custody and children being raised in joint custody after divorce. Children were found to be better adjusted in areas of self-esteem, family relationships, divorce related adjustment, academic achievement, and emotional and behavioral adjustment, when raised by parents who shared legal and physical custody.
Fabricius, William and Go Woon Suh (2017) "Should Infants and Toddlers Have Frequent Overnight Parenting Time With Fathers? The Policy Debate and New Data," <i>Psychology, Public Policy, and Law</i> 23:1, 68-84 (http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/law0000108)	
Braver, Sanford L., and Ashley M. Votruba. 2018. Does joint physical custody "cause" children's better outcomes? <i>Journal of Divorce & Remarriage</i> 59, (5) (07): 452-468.	While correlational studies have found more positive outcomes in children who have had parents with joint physical custody, this study aimed to see if a causal relationship could be determined. One of the main arguments has been that the primary benefit of joint physical custody rests with the families that choose to do it—there are unique characteristics to these families that benefit the children. Many of the previous studies were correlational and therefore, no causal relationship could be determined. However, the current research with advanced methodologies disproves this explanation. By discrediting this hypothesis, the rival explanation is supported-- there is indeed a causal relationship between joint physical custody and the benefits that children receive from such an arrangement.
Fabricius, W. (2020). Equal Parenting Time: The case for a legal presumption. <i>The Oxford Handbook of Children and the Law</i> (pp. 453-476). Oxford University Press.	"[T]he overall pattern of evidence indicates that legal presumptions of equal parenting time would help protect children's emotional security with each of their divorced parents, and consequently would have a positive effect on public health in the form of reduced long-term stress-related mental and physical health problems among children of divorce."
Linda Nielsen (2014) <i>Shared Physical Custody: Summary of 40 Studies on Outcomes for Children</i> , <i>Journal of Divorce & Remarriage</i> , 55:8, 613-635, DOI: 10.1080/10502556.2014.965578	Overall, the children in shared parenting families have better outcomes on measures of emotional, behavioral, and psychological well-being, as well as better physical health and better relationships with their fathers and their mothers, benefits that remained even when there were high levels of conflict between their parents.
Linda Nielsen (2011) <i>Shared Parenting After Divorce: A Review of Shared Residential Parenting Research</i> , <i>Journal of Divorce & Remarriage</i> , 52:8, 586-609, DOI: 10.1080/10502556.2011.619913	Studies indicate that shared residential parenting leads to better relationships with fathers, children benefit regardless of conflict, cooperation, wealth, or education, children view shared arrangements as in their best interests, and the United States is shifting towards more shared residential parenting.

<p>Warshak, R. (2018) Night Shifts: Revisiting Blanket Restrictions on Children's Overnights with Separated Parents, <i>Journal of Divorce & Remarriage</i>, 59:4, 282-323. DOI: 10.1080/10502556.2018.1454193</p>	<p>A review of the literature regarding infants and toddlers having overnights with fathers after separation and divorce. The research supports that children do not suffer from spending overnights with their fathers. Argues that in marriages fathers provide overnight care to the children and there is no reason why this should change after divorce.</p>
<p>Emery, R. (2004). <i>The truth about children and divorce</i>. New York, NY: Viking</p>	<p>This book provides parents with a more positive outlook to divorce. Dr. Emery describes how the negative effects of divorce can be mitigated when parents understand how to manage their emotions effectively. While divorce is an adjustment for children, it does not necessarily cause lasting damage. It is a major stressor, but "pain is not pathology. Grief is not a mental disorder."</p>
<p>Fabricius, W. (2003) Listening to Children of Divorce: New Findings That Diverge From Wallerstein, Lewis, and Blakeslee. <i>Family Relations</i> 52(4):385-396 DOI:10.1111/j.1741-3729.2003.00385.x</p>	<p>College students preferred equal time with parents after divorce. They reported better adult relationships with parents, feeling more supported by their parents, and receiving more college support from parents when they had equal parenting time arrangements after divorce.</p>
<p>Harmon, J. Matthewson, M, & Baker, A. (2022). Losses Experienced by Children Alienated From a Parent. <i>Current Opinion in Psychology</i>, 43: 7-12.</p>	<p>This article describes the lifelong losses a child experiences when they are alienated from a parent. The losses affect many areas such as identity and self-concept, enriching childhood experiences with parents and extended family, a sense of community, and quality relationships. The losses of parents and extended family are described as ambiguous, which is a kind of unresolved grief and lacks the closure necessary for healthy grieving.</p>
<p>Nielsen,L. (2017). Re- examining the Research on Parental Conflict, Co-Coparenting, and Custody Arrangements. <i>Psychology, Public Policy, and Law</i>, 23, 211-231</p>	<p>This article attempts to answer four questions: (1) How much consideration should be given to co-parenting conflict when determining parenting time, (2) Do children have better outcomes when their divorced parents have low levels of conflict, (3) are children's outcomes worsened by parents taking their divorces to court, and (4) are children's outcomes better in sole-physical custody situations if the parents are conflicted and uncooperative?</p>
<p>Linda Nielsen (2018): Joint Versus Sole Physical Custody: Children's Outcomes Independent of Parent-Child Relationships, Income, and Conflict in 60 Studies, <i>Journal Of Divorce & Remarriage</i>, DOI: 10.1080/10502556.2018.1454204</p>	<p>This article reviews the outcomes for children in joint physical custody (JPC) compared to those in sole physical custody (SPC) controlling for income, coparenting conflict, and quality of the parent-child relationship. Independent of income, conflict, or the quality of children's relationships with their parents, JPC generally children had better outcomes on most or on all measures.</p>