

HOW DID CHILDREN OF DIVORCE GET STUCK WITH THE VISITATION PLAN THAT AFFORDS THEM ACCESS TO THEIR NON RESIDENTIAL PARENT ONLY ONE NIGHT DURING THE WEEK AND EVERY OTHER WEEK-END?

What is the research that supports such a schedule? Where is the data that confirms that such a plan is in the best interest of the child?

Well, reader, you can spend your time from now until eternity researching the literature, and YOU WILL NOT DISCOVER ANY SUPPORTING DATA for the typical visitation arrangement with the non-residential parent! The reality is that this arrangement is based solely on custom. And just like the short story, "The Lottery," in which the prizewinner is stoned to death, the message is that deeds and judgments are frequently arrived at based on nothing more than habit, fantasy, prejudice, and yes, on "junk science."

This family therapist upholds the importance of both parents playing an active and substantial role in their children's lives----especially in situations when the parents are apart. In order to support the goal for each parent to provide a meaningful and considerable involvement in the lives of their children, I affirm that the resolution to custody requires an arrangement for joint legal custody and physical custody that maximizes the time with the non-residential---with the optimal arrangement being 50-50, whenever practical. It is my professional opinion that the customary visitation arrangement for non-residential parents to visit every other weekend and one night during the week is not sufficient to maintain a consequential relationship with their children. Although I have heard matrimonial attorneys, children's attorneys, and judges assert that the child needs the consistency of the same residence, I deem this assumption to be nonsense. I cannot be convinced that the consistency with one's bed trumps consistency with a parent!

Should the reader question how such an arrangement can be judiciously implemented which maximizes the child's time---even in a 50-50 arrangement---with the non-residential parent, I direct the reader to the book, *Mom's House, Dads House*, by the Isolina Ricci, PhD.

Indeed, the research that we do have supports the serious consequences to children when the father, who is generally the non-residential parent, does not play a meaningful role in lives of his children. The book, *Fatherneed*, (2000) by Dr. Kyle Pruitt, summarizes the research at Yale University about the importance of fathers to their children. And another post on this page summarizes an extensive list of other research.

Children of divorce and separation of their parents, previously had each parent 100% of the time and obviously cannot have the same arrangement subsequent to their parents separation. But it makes no sense to this family therapist that the result of parental separation is that the child is accorded only 20% time with one parent and 80% with the other. What rational person could possibly justify this?

