

Parental Conflict: It can be very harmful for children

The wish of all children of separation or divorce is that their parents do not argue or fight with each other and can work out difficulties in a mature fashion without resorting to hurtful comments and behaviors. Most children want to have quality time with each parent without interference from the other.

This wish has a strong basis in reality as research has shown that ongoing, unresolved, chronic conflict between separated parents has an extremely negative impact on the current and future mental health of their children.

It is common and normal for two parents to have different ideas, opinions, values, and priorities. Part of being successful in a post separation relationship with another person is being able to use appropriate communication skills so that ideas and opinions can be expressed and received with respect and differences of opinion can be worked out using healthy conflict resolution strategies.

If separated or divorced parents do not communicate respectfully with each other and do not have a good strategy for resolving conflicts, the result is chronic, unresolved conflict between the parents. There is an ongoing hostile emotional tone between the parents that continues to erupt over time and in the same patterns.

This harmful conflict can range from yelling, criticizing, blaming, put-downs, mocking, sarcasm, ignoring, intimidation and threats of harm, to actual physical violence such as throwing or destroying things, or grabbing, shoving, slapping, hitting, kicking, or other forms of physical assault. Chronic parental conflict is most common in families where parents have separated or divorced, or have never been married or lived together.

Your children are depending on YOU, their parents!

Parental conflict is far more disadvantageous to the formation of a child's relationship with family and friends and the child's social behaviour than any other aspect of the family's background**

** Findings by Statistic's Canada' longitudinal study on children and published in their report called "Growing up in Canada"



Don't let your children be damaged for life because of parental conflict

For further information about this program contact the parenting facilitator or the agency listed below:

Family Conflict Services

Tel: (705) 243-1405

Email: info@familyconflictservices.com

Providing support and advocacy services for Canadian children and their families

.....Helping children and parents of divorce and separation rebuild meaningful relationships



Community-Based Supervised Child Access Program



A program of interest to parents of separation and/or divorce in need of supervised child access services

Are these issues affecting you or your child?

- ❑ *Is your child experiencing disruption of supervised access service due to holiday schedules at the local supervised access centre?*
- ❑ *Has your child been going too long to a fixed-location supervised access centre and becoming bored and unhappy because of the same surroundings?*
- ❑ *Would you like your child to benefit from participating in normal activities during access periods such as going to the beach, hiking or participating in an organized public event in the community?*
- ❑ *Is the distance to the local access centre creating difficulties and inconveniences for the parents and child?*
- ❑ *Could you benefit from third party transportation of the child?*
- ❑ *Is your child finding it difficult to have meaningful contact with the other parent at an access center?*
- ❑ *Are you afraid of experiencing conflict with the other parent during child exchanges?*
- ❑ *Do you find it too cumbersome dealing through lawyers in matters relating to day to day parenting and child exchange issues?*
- ❑ *Do you need help to work out long term solutions relating to child access and exchanges?*

The FACTS about Separation and Divorce

Post-divorce or separation conflict between parents and members of extended families can have life-long negative impact on your children. Most research shows that of all factors which cause harm to children, parental conflict is the most damaging with significant long term effects.

It is vitally important that parents learn about the causes of their conflict and to learn what they must do to effectively eliminate conflict with their former spouse. The information provided to parents during the educational component of the Supervised Parenting Program will help them to lessen conflict and get their lives and the lives of their children back into a more normal state of functioning.

How the community-based supervised child access program works

In some situations when parents separate and emotions are high, parenting time with children may be a problem. Sometimes, difficulties arise at the time of the child's exchange between parents or between a parent and a relative, such as a grandparent. Other times there may be concerns by one parent about the child being alone with the other parent.

Although fixed-location supervised access centers can provide a useful service for very young children for a very limited period of time, such facilities often are unable to meet the needs of children on a continuing basis. Too long of an exposure to a fixed location supervised access centre can actually cause emotional harm to a child and damage a child's relationship with a parent.

In many cases children want to spend time with their other parent at home or they want to get out to explore, play and do things in the community that most other children like to do.

The Supervised Parenting Support/Transition Program is a service designed to get children and

parents back into a more normal environment and to assist them resume their lives that have been disrupted because of separation or divorce. During the supervised parenting children and their parents are given the opportunity to participate in activities, eating out, visiting relatives and more.

A trained supervisor accompanies the child and his/her parent during scheduled supervised access periods to activities outside in the community or even to the supervised parent's home. Supervisors are specially trained to observe the family at events in a more normal community setting. Trained child access supervisors ensure a safe and adequate environment for the child. Supervised child access reports are made available for court if necessary.

The program takes children and supervised parents from fully supervised parenting to unsupervised parenting over a transitional period of time.

In addition to the supervised child access component of the service, during the program the parents/parties involved will be provided with information about cooperative parenting, causes of conflict and the harm it causes to children and how to resolve issues through comprehensive co-parenting strategies.

Program guidelines ensure that the child access supervisor and the support team members provide services in the following ways:

- **Remain neutral and objective**
- **Work with parents and the court requirements to provide the best outcome for both the child and parents**
- **Stay focused on the child's health, safety and well being**
- **Provide court reports regarding the supervised parenting visits as needed in a timely manner**
- **Make honest referrals to other outside third party services which could be helpful to the child and/or the parents.**