

The Continuum of Options for Parenting Plans in DV Families

- ✓ ***Primary Parenting with Suspended or Supervised Access***
 - sole legal/sole physical custody

- ✓ ***Parallel Parenting with Monitored or Neutral Exchange***
 - sole or divided legal & physical custody

- ✓ ***Co-parenting with no access restrictions***
 - shared legal & sole or shared physical custody

✓ **Primary Parenting with Suspended or Supervised Access**

Provisions:

- Sole legal & physical custody to non-violent parent
- Safety provisions for victim parent & child in place
- support services offered but victims empowered by respecting self-determination
- Court-ordered treatment/rehab for abuser
- Detailed court order re access: time, dates, place of exchange, supervisor, behavioral objectives to graduate

Supervised Access Order may vary re

- Level of security
- Training of supervisor: therapeutic vs trained volunteer vs family member
- Place: visitation center vs outings versus home
- Activities & associates permitted

Or access may be suspended

- Temporarily
- Permanently (refer to dependency court)

When to use Primary Parenting with Supervised or Suspended Access

Supervision is appropriate for:

- *Hi on potency* (acutely dangerous - all types of violence)
- Mod-Hi PPP ratings
- Substance abusers & mentally ill
- Ambiguous cases during DV assessment
- History/risk of serious parenting problems of abuser
- Child traumatized by DV or abuse but wants & needs access to violent parent

Suspended is appropriate for:

- *Very high PPP ratings*
- Non-compliance with terms of supervised order
- Attempts or threats to abduct, seriously hurt, kill, use of child to hurt/harass other parent*
- Conviction for murder or serious injury of family member
- Persistent distress or refusal of child
- Child estranged from & unable to reconcile with previously abusive parent

✓ ***Parallel Parenting with Monitored or Neutral Exchange***

Provisions:

- Divided or Sole legal & physical custody (i.e. time &/or decision-making responsibilities)
- Boundaries & separation between parents e.g. structured telephone access
- Time-share schedule requires minimal communication
- Protocols for behavioral etiquette at time of exchange, & attendance at child events
- Consistent, safe child-care practices within separate homes
- Adherence to details of court order (not flexibility & compromise re changes)

Explicit Court Orders:

- detailing all times, dates, places of exchange
- behavioral objectives to graduate to shared parenting

When to use Parallel Parenting with Monitored or Neutral Exchange

Appropriate for:

- Adequate parenting by both parent alone but threat of renewed violence/conflict only when parents meet
- Unsubstantiated allegations of parent/spouse abuse & chronically conflicted parents
- Older children who have no special needs for parent's coordination
- Mod ratings on PPP, no ongoing threat of violence
- Graduates from monitored exchanges who meet objectives i.e. have credible evidence of good progress or completion of treatment
- Problematic behavior or distress by either parent or child at transitions

✓ ***Co-Parenting: With Unrestricted Access Provisions***

- Shared decision-making on major issues – education, health etc.
- Communication & joint problem solving between parents
- Common child care practices: consistent routines, discipline across homes
- Flexibility & compromise re schedule where possible
- Detailed court order is back-up when no agreement is reached about changes

When to use Co-parenting with Unrestricted Access

Appropriate when some capacity to communicate, resolve conflicts, trust, respect, remain child focused

- *Low ratings on PPP*
- SIV after crisis is passed & trauma resolved
- Others with substantial history of successful parallel parenting & cessation of violence & control problems
- Mentally ill & substance abusers who have substantial proof of rehabilitation

✓ ***Principles When Imposing Restrictions***

Any restrictions on a parent's access need to include:

- explicit goals with behavioral criteria that need to be met in order for parent & child to graduate to a less restrictive option
- a timely review of progress
- monitoring by the family court or its designated agent

✓ ***Principles for Lifting Restrictions***

Any resumption of unsupervised access should be contingent upon

- Cessation of threat of violence
- Credible reports of successful progress/ completion of treatment (for violence, substance abuse, psychosis, etc.)
- Children are prepared (e.g. reunification counseling)
- Parent accepts responsibility for violence & takes steps to reassure child & ensure future safety