

The Psychological Effects of Shared Parenting on Children: It's Complicated (But can we simplify it?)

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BROTHER

*Pizza
&
Italian Resto*

Glutton Free



For a Touch

237 N. Pennsylvania Ave

253 Bennet

The unhealthy 10%

- High conflict
- Untrusting
- Self-focused

Short-cuts to speed the decision

- Split “50-50” assumption
- Approximation rule
- Problems: Needs of child change over time; One parent’s role often limited in early infancy, approximation rule might not reflect this; special needs of parent or child may be overlooked

Shortcuts

- Counsel and court can educate parents regarding dynamic nature of parenting and children's' needs and development over time

A change in terms emphasizes relationships

- Shared parenting time: 35% or more of time with a parent
- Shared decision making
- Nonprimary vs primary parent

Reddit: TLDR

- Parents change as they adjust to the new family configuration
- Children change for developmental as well as adjustment reasons
- Shared parenting has a positive effect...in low conflict contexts
- Young children and teenagers require special consideration and recognition that a completely shared parenting situation may not be beneficial
- Children up to 3-4 years of age are vulnerable to separations in long lasting ways
- Custody orders can help educate parents about developmental change

Effects of separation on parents

- More disorganized
- Any previous routine affected => Affects children's routine and sense of stability
- Can be more anxious, depressed and angry for a time

Shared parenting in low conflict families

- Biggest predictor of child outcomes (more than residence):
 - Parenting abilities
 - Adequate income
 - Quality of housing, neighborhood
 - Family support

Factors that affect success of shared parenting

- Nonprimary parent's interest
- Both parents' interest in encourage nonprimary's relationship with children
- Time of (re) introduction of nonprimary parent post separation
- Frequency of contact
- Involvement in regular care activities

Time and Frequency

- Time spent in contact with children may be naturally less for primary parent, as it is in intact families. There is often, but not always, a disparity in infant care, older child caretaking, and auxiliary tasks (medical appointments, extracurricular activities) in intact families between parents.
- 50-50 is sometimes interpreted as strictly time divided.

- Teens & young adults

- Stronger academically, emotionally, psychologically than sole parenting, fewer health problems, less stress
- Felt closer to nonprimary parent confided in that person more
- Better adjusted overall, IF parents can coparent successfully
- Chronic conflict: more depression, problem behaviors, feel “caught in the middle”
- Need for autonomy, time away from family
- More negative outcomes if completely equal time is rigidly adhered to

- School age children
 - Less depressed, fewer health problems, less stress, less aggressive, fewer behavioral problems
 - Academics sometimes negatively affected (for primary residence w/father)
- For both
 - Nonprimary parent more likely to be involved in child's activities. For example, 90% (vs. 60%) of fathers attended their children's school events

Infants and very young children

- Developmental needs of this age period (0-4): trust, sense of stability, self-regulation
- Advocates for parent; court only advocate for child

Attachment's importance: Not interchangeable



A specialized relationship





<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Vx3WxwNPIbA>

Copy and paste this link into your browser if the video does not begin



Copy and paste this link into your browser if the video does not begin
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=apzXGEbZhto>





Birth to 2 years

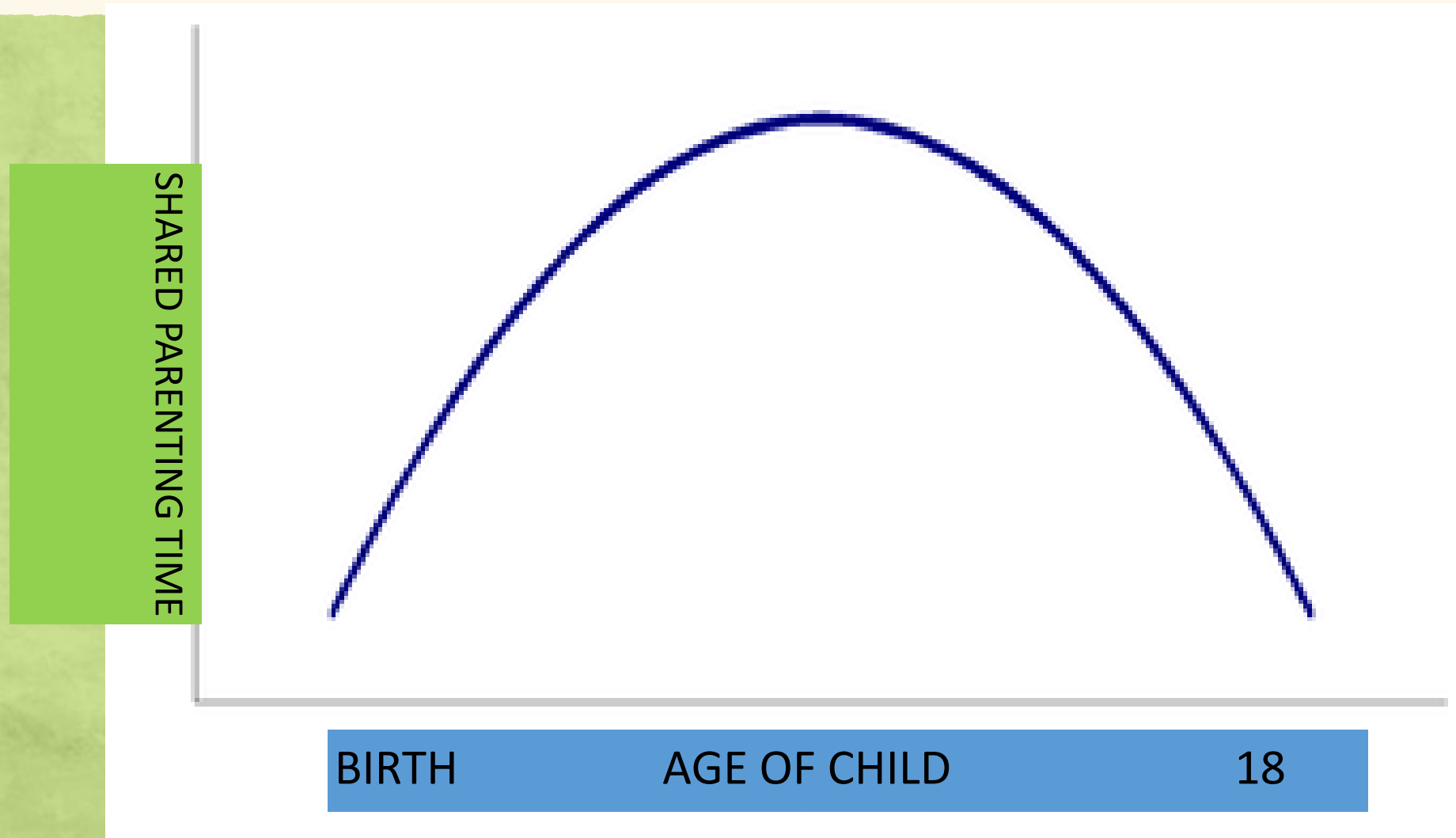
- Even one night per week overnight can lead to irritability and aggression
- Greater monitoring of the primary parent
- More anger toward primary parent
- Less persistence at a task
- More frustration in play

2 to 4 years of age

- Separation of 2-3 nights from primary parent problematic
- Heightened separation distress
- Anger or distance behaviors toward primary parent
- Aggression, negativity (persist into later years)
- Eating problems
- Less persistence at tasks

- Difficulty of reconstructing relationship at each meeting
- Impact on child's basic need to be able to depend on consistency of adult care
- In high conflict situations, parental stability and projection of mistrust on to the infant/young child can affect sense of safety, self-regulation, and beginning definitions of relationships

A dynamic care recommendation



Summary

- Shared parenting in low conflict families is generally beneficial, assuming equal competence and support systems
- Shared parenting (especially equally shared) should be considered with caution and with safeguards for review when there is high parent conflict
- Family bonds change over time even in intact families
- Young children and teenagers require special consideration in custody orders.
- There exists an opportunity for a dynamic custody order to educate parents about the changing needs of their children.

Resources

- Association of Family & Conciliation Courts
- <http://www.afccnet.org/Resource-Center/Resources-for-Professionals>
- **Judges' guide, ABA**
http://apps.americanbar.org/legalservices/probono/cchildcustody/judges_guide.pdf
- National Center for State Courts
- www.ncsc.org/topics/children-families-and-elders/marriage-divorce-and-custody/resource-guide.aspx