

Kansas Senate Bill 257



Senate Bill 257

Shared Parenting

A paradigm shift to encourage both divorced parents to play significant roles in the lives of their children.



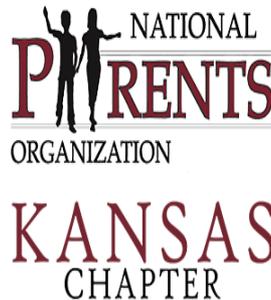
Custody Practices in Kansas

Toward the end of the 20th century, the vast majority of mothers in Kansas were awarded custody of their children. Divorce decrees offered children **visits** with their father every other weekend. This practice resulted in fathers becoming more like an uncle, where the children were guests in his home, and time spent together was filled with fun and games. The term “Disney Dad” was often used to describe these fathers. Under these circumstances, a proper and meaningful parent-child relationship was nearly impossible to form.

Today, joint custody is the norm in Kansas, where both parents have a say in educational, medical, dental, sports, etc. matters involving the children. Only one parent is designated as the residential parent, and laws are in place that are supposed to prohibit bias based upon the sex of the parent in custody determination. However, women continue to be awarded residential custody the majority of the time. Most children only see their non-residential parent for a maximum of 35 hours per month.

What is our vision of Shared Parenting in Kansas?

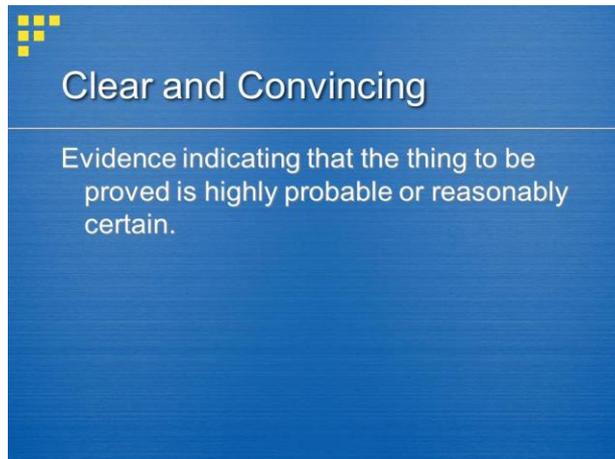
We envision a state where it is the right of every child to experience full and free involvement with both parents on an equal or nearly equal basis, unless clear and convincing evidence exists proving such an arrangement is not in the best interest of the child.



Why Clear and Convincing Evidence?

Clear and Convincing requires evidence that the claim against a parent is very highly probable, whereas the current practice requires a Preponderance of Evidence which requires that a claim is more likely than not.

Senate Bill 257 reduces the chance that a false claim or a claim not supported by modern research or best practices will result in a reduction in equal or nearly equal parenting time for children.



Good parents routinely lose physical custody of their children because they weren't deemed the "best" parent, without any finding of insufficient parenting.



Non Custodial Parents Become Non-Essential Parents

Common Practice: **70/30 Split**

One parent is given a secondary parenting role and alternating weekend “visitation/parenting time”.



Non custodial parents routinely go 10 days every two weeks without having an overnight with their children. This creates a striking contrast as to “how things were” in the marriage. But judges who disproportionately award primary residential custody ignore this reality.

Why Shared Parenting?



What Do Experts Say?

- The American Psychological Association peer reviewed flagship journal; *Psychology, Public Policy and the Law* recently published a paper on Shared Parenting endorsed by 110 of the world's leading experts in the area of child development and attachment. Shared parenting was found to be the most beneficial arrangement for children.
- Shared Parenting is supported by over 43 peer-reviewed papers.
- The largest study of children ever conducted who had experienced their parents' divorce or separation (over 150,000 participants), concludes shared parenting yields the best child well-being outcomes.
- Current research published by both Dr. Linda Nielson PhD, and Dr. Richard Warshak, PhD, leading experts on Shared Parenting, conclude that Shared Parenting is the best option for children. Their findings will be provided for your review.

Benefits of Shared Parenting

- Children are afforded the opportunity to develop a solid and meaningful relationship with both parents.
- Long-term outcomes are better for children who have both parents actively involved in their lives.
- Creates a platform for parents to collaborate efforts for their child's well-being.
- Reduces the feelings of loss experienced by children following separation or divorce.
- Encourages healthy child development by having frequent access to both parents during different stages of child development.
- Reduces the chances of abuse and/or neglect

Realizing the best parent for a child is both parents ...



- **25 states are considering shared parenting bills during this legislative session.**
- **Utah, Missouri, and Arizona recently passed laws enabling children to spend more time with their fathers.**
- **Arizona lawyers now tell fathers their children have a 90 percent chance of being allowed equal (50 percent) parenting time. Reports have shown that all agree: the new law is working well.**

Please support SB 257

...in serving the best interests of
children, we serve the best
interests of all humanity.

Carol Bellamy