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eNEWS

Sneak Peek: 11th Symposium on Child Custody Evaluations

Examining Unintended Consequences

November 6-8, 2014, San Antonio, Texas

The program will be out in mid-July! For now, here are some sneak peeks.

Plenary I, *The Unintended Consequences of Child Custody Evaluations*, will be a town hall meeting moderated by Arnold Shienvold, PhD, with discussants: Aaron Robb, PhD; Hon. Dianna Gould-Saltman; Jeffrey Wittmann, PhD; and Leslie Ellen Shear, JD, CFLS.

Plenary II, *The Activities and Roles of Trial Consultants*, will feature; David Martindale, PhD, ABPP; Milfred Dale, JD, PhD; Robert Simon, PhD; S. Margaret Lee, PhD; and Robin Deutsch, PhD.

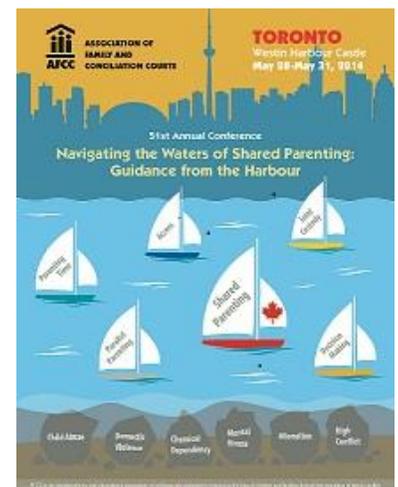
Pre-symposium Institutes include: *The Relocation Case in Court: Legal and Psychological Issues*, with Philip M. Stahl, PhD, ABPP, Michael Kretzmer, JD and Hon. Mark A. Juhas; *Using Gatekeeping as a Framework to Assess and Describe Family Dynamics within the Context of Parenting Plan Evaluations*, with Leslie M. Drozd, PhD, Michael A. Saini, PhD, MSW, RSW and Nancy W. Olesen, PhD; *The Unintended Consequences of Performing Custody Evaluations without Using the Rorschach*, with Robert E. Erard, PhD and *Writing the Child Custody Evaluation Report: Integrating Forensic and Clinical Perspectives*, with Daniel B. Pickar, PhD, ABPP and Robert L. Kaufman, PhD, ABPP.

Exhibits and Advertising

[Reserve your space now](#) to exhibit at the Symposium in San Antonio. Introduce your products and services, connect in person with attendees and presenters. If you cannot attend, a registration packet insert puts your marketing piece in the hands of each attendee. AFCC

MONTHLY E-NEWSLETTER
VOL. 9 NO. 6
JUNE 2014

AFCC Conferences



AFCC 51st Annual Conference
May 28–31, 2014
The Westin Harbour Castle
Toronto, Ontario, Canada
[More information](#)

Conference Diamond Sponsor



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tote bag sponsorships are now available for the symposium (San Antonio) and annual conference (New Orleans 2015). The previous year's tote bag sponsors are given the first option to sponsor again; open spots are first-come, first-served. Contact [Erin Sommerfeld](#) to be put on the waitlist.

[La Cantera Hill Country Resort](#)

[Texas Hill Country](#) is described as "the playground of Texas" and is known for its incredible views, beautiful wildflower fields and breathtaking sunsets. La Cantera provides a starting point for outdoor adventures including swimming, hiking, hunting and fishing. It's easy to visit the area's well-known attractions like [Six Flags Fiesta Texas](#); destination shopping at [The Shops at La Cantera](#); or take a day trip through [Texas Wine Country](#). Onsite you can enjoy two championship, 18-hole golf courses and a newly renovated full-service day spa, connected to a large fitness studio. The AFCC room rate is \$159/night single or double. A link for online reservations will be available mid-July.

Toronto Annual Conference Wrap Up

The AFCC 51st Annual Conference, *Navigating the Waters of Shared Parenting: Guidance from the Harbour*, May 28-31, at the Westin Harbour Castle in Toronto, was a great success. Over 1,100 family law professionals from 17 countries attended. More than 500 attendees hailed from Canada (including over 400 from Ontario). We hope to see you at next year's annual conference in [New Orleans](#)!

Awards Ceremony

Awards were presented at the 51st Annual Conference in Toronto. Joan VanDuzer, wife of the late John E. Van Duzer, presented the Distinguished Service Award to Hon. Emile R. Kruzick. Rachel Birnbaum was the recipient of the Stanley Cohen Distinguished Research Award. The Irwin Cantor Innovative Program Award honored Legal Aid of Western Ohio and was accepted by Pamela Hayman-Weaner. Connie J.A. Beck received the Meyer Elkin Essay Award. The AFCC President's Award was awarded to Gabrielle Davis and Loretta Frederick. A Special Commendation was presented to Hon. William Jones. Congratulations and thank you for the important work you do.

[Read more](#)

Poster Gallery

Posters representing current research, practice and policy were displayed at the AFCC 51st Annual Conference. Click below to view



AFCC 11th Symposium on Child Custody Evaluations

November 6–8, 2014
La Cantera Hill Country Resort
San Antonio, Texas
[More information](#)

AFCC 52nd Annual Conference

May 27–30, 2015
Hilton New Orleans Riverside
New Orleans, Louisiana

AFCC Regional Training Conference

November 5–7, 2015
Hyatt Regency Columbus
Columbus, Ohio

AFCC Chapter Annual Conferences

Minnesota Chapter Annual Conference

July 17–18, 2014
The Minneapolis Boulevard Hotel
Brooklyn Center, Minnesota
[More information](#)

Australia Chapter Annual Conference

Children as a Starting Point: Assessing Families for Family Law Disputes
August 15, 2014
Grand Hyatt
Melbourne, Australia
[More information](#)

Wisconsin Chapter Annual Conference

PDF versions of posters displayed. Keep an eye out for the call for poster proposals for next year's annual conference in New Orleans.

- [An Analysis of Long Term Clients within Supervised Access Programs](#)
- [An Evaluation Study of the Overcoming Barriers Family Camp](#)
- [Child Adjustment in Joint Custody or Sole Maternal Custody: Role of Family Processes](#)
- [Custody Evaluators' and Judges' Social Representation of the Best Interests of the Child Principle](#)
- [Evaluating the Involvement of Children in the Montreal Parenting Coordination Project: Preliminary Results](#)
- [Examining the Role of Interim Parenting Plan Custody Evaluations](#)
- [Parental Time Advisory Guidelines for Very Young Children](#)
- [Social Work in the Context of a Community Legal Clinic](#)

Silent Auction

The AFCC 16th Annual Silent Auction raised over \$15,000 for special projects and initiatives. This success was made possible by the [generous donors, bidders and the wonderful team of volunteers](#). Enjoy your winnings and thank you for your generosity!

Certificates of Attendance

If you attended the conference and require a certificate of attendance, certificates are now available online. There is also a processing fee of \$15 for AFCC members and \$20 for non-members. If you did not sign up for a certificate with your registration, this fee can be paid online. [More information](#)

Conference Audio and Materials

AFCC members receive free access to audio recordings of the plenary sessions.

- Keynote Address, "160 Girls"—*Making Legal History*, with Fiona Sampson, BA, MA, LLB, PhD, from [the equality effect](#).
- Plenary I: *Sharing Parenting after Separation and Divorce: The Ideal and the Real*, with Marsha Kline Pruett, PhD, MSL, J. Herbie DiFonzo, JD, PhD, Philip Epstein, QC, LSM, Larry S. Fong, PhD, Hon. R. John Harper and Martha A. McCarthy, LLB.
- Plenary II: *Charting a Course for Successful Parenting Arrangements in Domestic Violence-Related Child Custody Cases*, with Peter Jaffe, PhD, Katreena Scott, PhD, CPsych,

Understanding and Managing the Challenges of Relocation: A Factor Based Approach
September 26, 2014
Country Springs Hotel and Conference Center
Pewaukee, Wisconsin
[More information](#)

Florida Chapter Annual Conference

October 16–18, 2014
The Wyndham Tampa Westshore
Tampa, Florida
[More information](#)

Ontario Chapter Annual Conference

Special Issues Facing Family Courts
October 16–17, 2014
Marconi Club
London, Ontario
[More information](#)

Arizona Chapter Annual Conference

Tomorrow is Here: Examining the Challenges of the Modern Family
February 6–8, 2015
Sedona, Arizona
[More information](#)

California Chapter Annual Conference

Inventing the Future: Getting Ahead of the Curve for California's Families
February 6–8, 2015
Westin South Coast Plaza Hotel
Costa Mesa, California
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AFCC Chapters

Loretta Frederick, JD and Gabrielle Davis, JD.

[Members click here to listen and download.](#)

Conference audio is available to members and nonmembers for purchase through [Digital Conference Providers](#). Recordings of the entire conference are available for a discounted price or purchase individual sessions; recordings of pre-conference institutes are also available.

There are a very limited number of leftover USB drives containing conference session handouts remaining. To check availability, please call the AFCC office at 608-664-3750 or email [Carly Kreger](#). The cost for a USB drive is \$20 for members and \$40 for non-members, shipping fees apply.

Giving Thanks

This conference would not have been the incredible success it was without the help of many extraordinary people and organizations. Thank you to the [Ontario Chapter of AFCC](#) and its Board of Directors; special thanks to the [Sponsorship Committee](#), which was instrumental in garnering support from Toronto area sponsors. Thank you again to our [conference sponsors, collaborating organizations, conference program committee, conference shepherds, exhibitors](#), advertisers, and of course everyone who attended.

In Memoriam—Tim Salius

AFCC was deeply saddened to hear of the passing of Anthony "Tim" Salius, Jr., May 27, 2014, and extends its deepest sympathies and condolences to his family. He succumbed to idiopathic pulmonary fibrosis, a fatal lung disease with no known cure. For 36 years, Tim was the director of the Family Division for the Superior Court, State of Connecticut Judicial. A strong advocate against domestic violence, he was instrumental in the passage of numerous domestic violence laws. Tim was the only two-term president of AFCC (1984-1986). Until his passing, he was the chairman of the Connecticut Advisory Committee for Juvenile Justice.

[Read more](#)

Domestic Relations Courts, Reaching for the Summit

By Stephanie Graubner Nelson

The *Ohio Domestic Relations Summit: Maximizing Resources, Minimizing Conflict for Children and Families*, was held for members of the Ohio Judiciary and other stakeholders in April 2014. A goal of

Network and share your interdisciplinary view of family court matters on a local level. There are currently chapters in the following states and provinces:

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The opinions expressed in articles published or linked to in the *AFCC eNEWS* are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the positions of the Association of Family and Conciliation Courts.

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the summit was minimizing conflict for Ohio children and families. Leading up to the summit, teams of domestic relations court judges and their justice system partners from counties across Ohio participated in regional conferences to assess their case management systems and to examine community resources.

[Read more](#)

Thank You Scholarship Fund Donors

Onsite donations at the annual conference put this year's appeal over the top! Over \$30,000 was raised to fund scholarships for future AFCC conferences. Thank you for your generosity; the opportunities you have given the recipients can really make a lasting difference in their practice and careers. Here are some words of thanks from a recipient of a scholarship to the annual conference in Toronto:

I want to thank you all for the opportunity to attend an AFCC conference this year via your generous scholarship. I have wanted to attend since becoming a member in 2009, but finances always seem to present a barrier. The conference was everything (and more) that I anticipated and I certainly came away from the experience enriched personally and professionally. Now more than ever, I look forward to attending more conferences and increasing my professional affiliation with AFCC as well as educating more professionals about the value of membership. Thank you again.

Although our goal was met for this year, every donation helps the future success of the scholarship program. [Donate today.](#)

[Thank you to the 2013-2014 donors](#)

Member News

Clare Huntington, New York, New York, a professor at Fordham Law School, has written a new book, [Failure to Flourish: How Law Undermines Family Relationships](#), which explores the connection between families and inequality, arguing that the legal regulation of families stands fundamentally at odds with the needs of families.

Chapter News

AFCC is pleased to welcome two new chapters, **Ohio** and **Maryland**. The AFCC Board of Directors approved provisional chapter status for both. Contact the AFCC office to add chapter membership to your parent organization membership. There are now 22 [AFCC Chapters!](#)

AFCC Board of Directors

AFCC is pleased to welcome new board members Milfred Dale, PhD,

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JD, Hon. Dianna Gould-Saltman and Stacey Platt, JD, for terms beginning July 1, 2014. Thank you to outgoing board members Linda Fieldstone, MEd, Grace Hawkins, MSW, Arnold Shienvold, PhD, who have completed their service. Very special thanks to Nancy Ver Steegh for her leadership and commitment while serving as AFCC President. The AFCC Executive Committee, effective July 1, 2014, is: President: Richard Altman, JD; President Elect: Hon. Peter Boshier; Vice President: Marsha Kline Pruett, PhD, MSL; Secretary: Annette Burns, JD; Treasurer: Matthew J. Sullivan, PhD and Past President Nancy Ver Steegh, JD, MSW.

Family Law in the News

Children of Divorced Parents Suffer an Increased Risk of Obesity

By Benita Matilda, courtesy of Science World Report

The new study presented at the European Congress on Obesity in Sofia found that changes in family structure drastically affect a child's weight, according to MedicalXpress.

[Read more](#)

Bitcoin Could be Used to Hide Assets in Divorces, Warn Lawyers

By Jane Croft, courtesy of Financial Times

Bitcoin, the electronic currency, could be used by divorcing spouses to hide assets from estranged partners, lawyers have said, as court battles shift their focus to the disclosure of assets.

[Read more](#)

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The Association for Conflict Resolution (ACR) is a professional organization enhancing the practice and public understanding of conflict resolution. We are a professional association for mediators, arbitrators, educators and other conflict resolution practitioners. ACR works in a wide range of settings throughout the United States and around the world.

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New Ways for Families is a method for strengthening conflict resolution skills for parents in separation or divorce. Any of the four models can be used in family court, mediation, collaborative divorce, or post-divorce. The goal is to help parents make their own parenting decisions out of court.

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AFCC 2014 Awards

John E. VanDuzer Distinguished Service Award: Emile R. Kruzick

The John E. VanDuzer Distinguished Service Award recognizes outstanding contributions and achievements by AFCC members. The award is named for the late Justice John E. VanDuzer who served as the first Canadian president of AFCC in 1983. Justice VanDuzer distinguished himself as a tireless advocate for children and families. He initiated the formation of the first integrated federal provincial family court, the Unified Family Court of Hamilton-Wentworth.

The 2014 recipient of the John E. VanDuzer Distinguished Service Award is Justice Emile Kruzick, of the Superior Court of Justice, Toronto, Ontario. Justice Kruzick epitomizes the qualities sought in a recipient of this award, serving families first as a lawyer and then as a judge, keenly aware of the importance of family law and the impact of his role. A highly regarded and respected jurist in Toronto, his remarkably kind, approachable personality makes him a friend to anyone he meets. Justice Kruzick served as AFCC President 2009-10, and has been a supportive champion of the AFCC Ontario Chapter and AFCC.



Stanley Cohen Distinguished Research Award: Rachel Birnbaum

The Stanley Cohen Distinguished Research Award is sponsored by the Oregon Family Institute. The award was created to recognize outstanding research and/or research achievements in the field of family and divorce. The award is named for the late Dr. Stanley Cohen, a founding member of AFCC who served as AFCC Executive Director and co-editor of the *Family and Conciliation Courts Review*.

The 2014 recipient of the Stanley Cohen Distinguished Research Award is Dr. Rachel Birnbaum, Associate Professor cross-appointed with Childhood & Social Institutions (Interdisciplinary Programs) at King's University College, the University of Western Ontario, in London, Ontario. Her research focuses on interdisciplinary collaboration with academic scholars in sociology, psychology, law, social work and medicine. Dr. Birnbaum has been the principal investigator and co-investigator in many peer-reviewed research projects since 2003 and is funded by the Social Science and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC); the Canadian Institute of Health Research, Ottawa, Canada (CIHR). Her research has spanned over 25 years, focusing on children's participation in family breakdown, child legal representation, access to justice and working with high conflict separated families. She has published and co-authored over 50 articles, chapters and books on these topics.

Irwin Cantor Innovative Program Award: Legal Aid of Western Ohio

The Irwin Cantor Innovative Program Award was created to recognize innovative court-connected or court-related programs created by a member of the Association of Family and Conciliation Courts. The award is named for the late Hon. Irwin Cantor, former AFCC President from Maricopa County (Phoenix) Arizona.

The 2014 recipient of the Irwin Cantor Innovative Program Award is Legal Aid of Western Ohio, accepted by Pamela Hayman-Weaner, Esq. Legal Aid provides services to low income individuals, through donations and state, federal and local funds. In the past several years, Legal Aid has experienced budget reductions and a substantial increase in the number of counties served, from a small number to 32 throughout western Ohio. Despite these challenges, Legal Aid of Western Ohio has continued to identify ways to deliver services, including traveling pro se clinics, Family Justice Centers (providing services in family violence matters) and free legal services (both unbundled and complete representation) through bar association volunteers.



AFCC 2014 Awards *Continued*

Meyer Elkin Essay Award: Connie J.A. Beck

The Meyer Elkin Essay Award is presented to the author(s) of the article judged as the best of those published in *Family Court Review* for each volume. The winner is selected by the *Family Court Review* editorial staff.

The 2014 recipient of the Meyer Elkin Essay Award is Dr. Connie J.A. Beck. Dr. Beck is being recognized for her work as special issue editor of the Special 50th Anniversary Issue of *Family Court Review* (January 2013). Dr. Beck is an Associate Professor in the Psychology, Policy and Law Program at the University of Arizona. The recognition of Dr. Beck's work as a special issue editor is a departure from presenting the award to an article author, acknowledging the significant historical value of the 50th Anniversary Issue.



President's Award: Gabrielle Davis and Loretta Frederick

The AFCC President's Award is awarded annually to an AFCC member who has provided exemplary service to the association, as selected by the AFCC President. This year's co-recipients are Loretta Frederick, Esq., (Senior Policy Advisor) and Gabrielle Davis, Esq., (Legal and Policy Advisor) of the Battered Women's Justice Project, a national domestic violence resource center in Minneapolis, Minnesota. Ms. Frederick and Ms. Davis have immersed themselves in AFCC, attending and presenting at conferences, serving on task forces and contributing to AFCC initiatives and publications. They have been responsible for building important bridges between AFCC and the domestic violence advocacy community. Together they lead the Battered Women's Justice Project's Custody Initiative to enhance safety by ensuring that family court decision-making accounts for the nature and effects of domestic violence. They also serve on the AFCC-NCJFCJ Task Force on Child Custody Evaluations and Domestic Violence.

Special Commendation: William Jones

AFCC Special Commendations are presented on special occasions to recognize outstanding contributions to children and families. Special Commendations have been presented for contributions such as the Sesame Workshop program, *Little Children, Big Challenges: Divorce*. This year, AFCC presents a Special Commendation to Hon. William Jones, a former Trustee of the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges, a former AFCC member and a liaison between AFCC and the NCJFCJ. Judge Jones is being recognized for his efforts in developing and nurturing the collaborative relationship between AFCC and the Family Violence Department of NCJFCJ that resulted in the Wingspread Conference on Domestic Violence and Family Courts and ongoing partnership between the organizations.





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This conference would not have been the incredible success it was without the help of many extraordinary people and organizations. Thank you to the Ontario Chapter of AFCC and its Board of Directors; special thanks to the Sponsorship Committee, which was instrumental in garnering support from Toronto area sponsors. Thank you again to our conference sponsors, collaborating organizations, conference program committee, conference shepherds, exhibitors, advertisers, and of course everyone who attended.

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Friday, November 7—Exhibit Forum: 7:30am–5:00pm; Open Forum—Custody Evaluations and Domestic Violence Task Force: 5:15pm–6:15pm

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Domestic Relations Courts, Reaching for the Summit

By Stephanie Graubner Nelson

The *Ohio Domestic Relations Summit: Maximizing Resources, Minimizing Conflict for Children and Families*, was held for members of the Ohio Judiciary and other stakeholders in April 2014. A goal of the summit was minimizing conflict for Ohio children and families. Leading up to the summit, teams of domestic relations court judges and their justice system partners from counties across Ohio participated in regional conferences to assess their case management systems and to examine community resources.

Ohio Supreme Court Chief Justice Maureen O'Connor charged the judges to lead a delegation of four additional key leaders from their communities who have the vision and ability to affect real change in the lives of children and families in transition. Justice system partners included: members of the bar, guardians ad litem, custody evaluators, mediators, child support enforcement agency representatives, victim service providers, and court or clerk staff.

To assess the current state of their court, using a facilitator provided by the Supreme Court, teams completed an assessment of their local case management practices by identifying tasks that each party performs to advance a case through the entire caseflow process. The goal of this case management analysis is to streamline, combine, or reorganize steps in the process. Following the analysis stage, teams assessed their resources to ensure their optimal use. Finally, teams worked to identify challenges and solutions.

The summit shined a light on Ohio's domestic relations courts, which have jurisdiction over all proceedings involving divorce or dissolution of marriage, annulment, legal separation, spousal support, and allocation of parental rights and responsibilities for the care of children.

Teams learned about promising Ohio and national practices to promote discussions on improving the case management for parties appearing before the court. Presentations focused on caseflow management, minimizing conflict by promoting the well-being of families and the best interest of the children, protecting families from abuse, and dispute resolution. Teams also devoted time to facilitated planning at the summit. The idea for the DR Summit came about after the success of the Supreme Court's *Beyond the Numbers* project, which

primarily focused on improving court processes for the benefit of children and families in child protection cases.

In 2012 and 2013, several members of the committee were offered scholarships to attend the annual Association of Family and Conciliation Courts conferences to gather ideas, collaborate, and identify topics and speakers for the summit. The Supreme Court established a dedicated [webpage](#) for the summit with relevant resources and upcoming events to further raise awareness.

In May 2013, regional judicial leadership seminars were held as the first of two planned series of pre-summit activities. The seminars integrated ethical scenarios of collaboration and domestic relations case processing and spotlighted judicial leadership in the context of collaboration with various judicial system partners.

In June 2013, the planning committee met to discuss caseload management and child-centered decision-making as topics for the summit. The committee worked with the National Center for State Courts (NCSC) to detail how these topics might best be presented during the summit. In November 2013, regional team meetings provided a forum for the domestic relations judges to bring together their county teams to assess strengths and challenges, and to discuss case flow management, high-performing courts, and the measurement of system improvement. Each team was provided with a facilitator to assist discussions. Finally, four educational tracks were selected: case management, domestic violence, dispute resolution, and child-centered decision-making. Organizers hope local courts will weave these into their local initiatives. Time was built in for county-level participants to meet as a team, which helped them examine their specific strengths and challenges.

Judge Deborah A. Alspach of the Marios County Family court said her team is always looking for ways to improve its three-year-old, early neutral evaluation approach to custody matters. “We hope to expand it to financial matters and perhaps to dependency, neglect, and abuse in the future. Recently, [Cuyahoga County Domestic Relations Court Chief] Magistrate [Serpil] Ergun and I went to the National Center for State Courts in Denver. We worked on developing a “triage” tool that will help courts better direct families to services based on their level of need. The value in this is that families with a low level of need for services can be given what they need to move through the system more easily and quickly. The idea is to allow the court the opportunity to give high-need cases the time, attention, and services they need.”

Judge Diane M. Palos, Cuyahoga County Domestic Relations Court, and chair of the planning committee said, “In bringing together all the judges who have Domestic Relations jurisdiction to hear the latest information on case management, child-focused and alternative processes for decision-making in parenting cases and domestic violence, while providing a platform to share the

information and to problem solve with community partners, the Supreme Court has not only provided innovative content, but innovative interaction. The opportunity to learn and discuss new options within and among courts, court partners, and experts will lead to better processes and solutions in our local communities.”

The Domestic Relations Summit has concluded, but the work continues. Post-summit education will attempt to spur local projects to completion. “We have found that the continued communication with our partners has strengthened those relationships and improved services to our community. The summits have opened communication between the court and supporting agencies to address issues and find solutions before they become problems. I am hopeful that the DR Summit will have the same result,” said Judge Alspach.

The summit and pre-summit activities were subsidized with funds awarded from the Ohio Office of Criminal Justice Services, Office of Violence Against Women, and the State Justice Institute. Additional resources were committed by the Ohio Association of Domestic Relations Judges (funds) and the Ohio Mediation Association, which dedicated volunteers to serve as facilitators.

Stephanie Graubner Nelson is the policy and research counsel in the Children and Families Section at the Supreme Court of Ohio. She served as liaison to the planning committee for the Ohio Domestic Relations Summit.

Parental time advisory guidelines for very young children

Pepita Capriolo, s.c.j., Dr. Yvon Gauthier, Me Marie Christine Kirouack



This is the result of research done by the authors. It does not represent the opinion of the Superior Court of Quebec.

Objectives :

- To inform the age criterion contained in most definitions of « *best interest of the child* » ;
- To prioritize the child's interests over the parents' rights ;
- To take into account early childhood development ;
- To allow children of all financial backgrounds to benefit from such information even in the absence of expert witnesses;
- To maintain judicial discretion in individual cases.

Guiding principles:

- Attachment theory requires the presence of the principal figure of attachment in a young child's life in a sustained and meaningful way;
- Both parents play an important role in a healthy child development;
- The presence of the non custodial parent need not be measured in hours and minutes but rather in quality of the relationship.

Parental time advisory guidelines: time tables

Age :	Time 'without' highs*	AND*	Time 'including' highs**	Time 'without' highs*	AND*	Time 'including' highs**
0-6 months	3 periods of 2 hrs/week	None	3 periods of 4 hrs/week	None	None	None
7-12 months	3 periods of 3 hrs/week	None	3 periods of 4 hrs/week	1 period of 16 hrs per 4 weeks	None	None
13-18 months	3 periods of 4 hrs/week	None	3 periods of 4 hrs/week	1 period of 16 hrs per 2 weeks	None	None
19-24 months	3 periods of 4 hrs/week	1 period of 16 hrs per 4 weeks	2 periods of 4 hrs/week	1 period of 16 hrs/week	None	None
25-36 months	3 periods of 4 hrs/week	1 period of 16 hrs per 2 weeks	2 periods de 4 hrs per 2 week	2 periods of 24 hrs per 2 week	AND	1 period 16 hrs per 2 weeks
37-48 months	2 periods of 4 hrs/week	1 period of 16 hrs/week	2 periods of 4 hrs/week	7 periods of 24 hrs per 2 weeks	None	None

Developmental milestones

- 0-6 months:** Total physical dependence, exclusive breast-feeding (or bottle), no solids, extremely rapid neurological growth, onset of the « *sense of trust* » that someone will respond to the child's needs.
- 7-12 months:** Beginning to walk, attachment to the main caregiver (primary attachment figure), separation anxiety from the attachment figure, the beginning of object permanence.
- 13-18 months:** Walking ability consolidates, object permanence consolidates while remaining rudimentary.
- 19-24 months:** Onset of spoken language and symbolic thought, development of complex emotions (guilt, shame, empathy), consolidation of attachment to the primary attachment figure and development of attachment to other often present significant persons.
- 25-36 months:** The "terrible twos": testing independence, brain reaches 75% of the adult weight, object permanence is reached; Acquisition of speech helps the child with the regulation of emotions.
- 37-48 months:** Consolidation of developmental achievements, onset of peer socialisation, acquisition of concepts of time ("today", "yesterday", "tomorrow") and space ("my house", "your house").

Factors to consider:

The suggested grading system proposes to measure the capacity of the child to withstand separation from the principal figure of attachment.

Age :	A) Level of parental conflict	B) Parent's capacity to communicate	C) Harmonious transitions	D) Actual availability of the non resident parent
0-6 months	0 to 20	0 to 16	0 to 16	0 to 12
7-12 months	0 to 20	0 to 16	0 to 16	0 to 12
13-18 months	0 to 20	0 to 16	0 to 16	4 to 12
19-24 months	0 to 20	0 to 16	0 to 16	4 to 12
25-36 months	4 to 20	4 to 16	0 to 16	6 to 12
37-48 months	4 to 20	8 to 16	0 to 16	6 to 12

A) Level of parental conflict	B) Parent's capacity to communicate	C) Harmonious transitions	D) Availability of the non resident parent
All studies are to the effect that a significant conflict between the parents is extremely noxious to the child's well-being.	Problematic communication, in the absence of mutual respect, also causes much stress for the child.	Transitions in which the parents are capable of giving the child the sense that they trust each other as parent.	This factor implies that it is the parent and not a third party who will be present, thus favouring a strong attachment with that parent.

Regardless of child's age	E) Duration of parents' cohabitation	F) Domestic establishment of the non resident parent	G) Respect of child's routine	H) Siblings' presence	I) Presence of significant others
Parents never cohabited	0	0-6 months	0 to 8	0 to 8	0
Prior to child's birth, parents cohabited less than 9 months	1	7-12 months	0 to 8	0 to 8	1
Prior to child's birth, parents cohabited 9 months or more	2	13-18 months	0 to 8	2 to 8	2
Parents cohabited with the child at least 6 months	8	19-24 months	0 to 8	2 to 8	3
Parents cohabited with the child at least 12 months	10	25-36 months	0 to 8	3 to 8	4
Parents cohabited with the child at least 18 months	12	37-48 months	0 to 8	4 to 8	4

E) Duration of parents' cohabitation	F) Domestic establishment of non resident parent	G) Respect of child's routine	H) Siblings' presence	I) Significant others
The duration of the parents' relation both before and after the birth of the baby has a direct impact on the parents' ability to establish a co-parenting relationship.	An adequate living environment, which need not be luxurious but appropriate to respond to the child's daily needs.	Compliance with the child's routines aims to maintain stability as a source of security for him despite the parents' separation.	Siblings and other significant persons can reinforce the baby's sense of security while in surroundings located away from her primary attachment figure.	

Mitigating factors:

Section 2. Distance between residences (time)	Subtract:	Subtract:
0-6 months	0	0-6 months
7-12 months	5	7-12 months
13-18 months	5	13-18 months
19-24 months	10	19-24 months
25-36 months	10	25-36 months
37-48 months	15	37-48 months

Mitigating Factors:

- Distance:** Distance is an important source of difficulty for the child, not only in terms of travel, but also for the increased separation from the child's customary environment; This is why it becomes increasingly important as the child grows older.
- Breast-feeding:** According to the World Health Organization and Health Canada, breast-feeding is essential up to the age of six (6) months and recommended until 24 months for the physical and mental well-being of the child.

Limits to application of guidelines:

- The guidelines apply only where both parents have at least adequate parental capacity :
 - Each can demonstrate sensitivity to the child's needs and can respond appropriately ;
- In cases of child abuse, domestic violence, disability or prolonged interruption in the parental relationship, special treatment outside a strictly chronological application of the advisory guidelines is required;
- In all cases of unavailability of one parent, the other should always be the first choice for taking care of the child regardless of the advisory guidelines.

CHILD ADJUSTMENT IN JOINT CUSTODY OR SOLE MATERNAL CUSTODY: ROLE OF FAMILY PROCESSES

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INTRODUCTION

- Currently, joint custody is either recognized, presumed, or mandated in Western countries. Joint physical custody accounted for approximately 21% of children of postdivorce families in the province of Quebec (Canada).
- Many investigations have compared the effects of sole- or joint-custody arrangements on children's adjustment (Melli & Brown, 2008 ; Spruijt & Duindam, 2010). However, a clear and unambiguous conclusion regarding the effects of custody arrangements is still lacking.
- To explain children's adjustment in post-divorce situations, many authors affirm that family processes variables are more important than the family arrangement *per se* (Lee, 2002 ; McIntosh & al., 2010 ; Vanassche, Sodermans, Matthijs, & Swicegood, 2013).
- Now, in this area of research, a key issue is to investigate, for whom children joint physical custody is in the children's best interest and under which circumstances. Currently, studies examine the association between custody arrangements and relational contexts, with the objective of better understanding which processes affect the well-being of children.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

- Compare children's adjustment and relational contexts for families with sole mother or joint physical custody arrangements.
- Examine the association between conflict and children's behavioral adjustment with sole mother or joint physical custody arrangements, and whether this association is mediated by family processes such as:
 - Quality of the mother-child and father-child relationships;
 - Triangulation and child involvement during the conflict;
 - Difficult transitions between the parental households.
- Investigate whether the strength of these associations is conditioned by sole maternal and joint custody families.

METHODOLOGIE

– SAMPLE –

112 boys and girls from 8 to 11 years old in joint custody or sole maternal custody.

The child respondents were recruited from three different sources : primary schools, divorced parent associations, newspapers.

	Joint custody	Sole maternal custody
N	37	75
Age of children	10,4	10
Sex of children (Girls)	59,5%	45%
Months elapsed since the parental separation	28,6	32,4
Friendly context of divorce proceedings	43,2%	30,1%
New partner	18,9%	28,4%
Median annual income	35 332\$	25 416\$

– INSTRUMENTS –

Children and parents informed questionnaires on two separate occasions at a 1-year interval.

INSTRUMENTS COMPLETED BY CHILDREN:

- Conflict Properties subscale and Triangulation subscale of the Children's Perception of Interparental Conflict Questionnaire (Grych & al., 1992)
- Child's Attitudes toward the Mother (CAM, Hudson, 1982)
- Child's Attitudes toward the Father (CAF, Giuli & Hudson, 1977)

INSTRUMENTS COMPLETED BY PARENTS:

- Child Behavior Checklist (Achenbach, 1991)
- Multidimensional Assessment of Interparental Conflict Scale (MAIC, Tschann & al., 1999)
- Child Involvement during the Conflict Subscale of the MAIC
- Three items of the Acrimony Scale (Emery, 1982) for evaluated difficult transitions

KEY FINDINGS

OBJECTIVE 1 (Cf. Table 2):

- Sole custody family undergo more child involvement during the conflict and difficult transitions than joint custody family.

OBJECTIVE 2 (Cf. Table 3 and Figure 1):

Joint physical custody: Three variables mediated the association between conflict and children's internalizing problems:

- Transitions (children's and parent's perception of interparental conflict)
- Triangulation
- Quality of the relationship with mother (children's and parent's perception of interparental conflict)

Sole maternal custody: One variable mediated the association between conflict and children's internalizing problems: Transitions (children's and parent's perception of interparental conflict)

OBJECTIVE 3 (Cf. Table 3):

Problems in mother-child relationship, triangulation and transitions to provide greater contributions association between conflicts and child internalizing behaviour problems in joint physical custody than in sole maternal custody.

TABLES AND FIGURES

COMPARISON CHILDREN'S ADJUSTMENT AND RELATIONAL CONTEXTS IN JOINT PHYSICAL AND SOLE MATERNAL ARRANGEMENTS (T1 / T2)

Table 2: Children's adjustment and relational contexts in different custody arrangements (T1 / T2)

Measures	Joint physical (N=37)		Sole maternal (N=75)	
	T1	T2	T1	T2
CHILD ADJUSTMENT				
Internalizing behavior problems	56,5	53,5	57,6	53,4
Externalizing behavior problems	52,3	48,8	53,5	50,7
RELATIONAL CONTEXTS				
Conflict (child)	15,3	13,2	16,3	12,7
Conflict (parent)	24,1	22,5	21,7	21,2
Triangulation (child)	1,6	1,3	1,3	1,2
Implication (parent)	8,7	8,1	10,1	10,8
Difficult transitions	1,7	1,5	2	1,9
Mother-child relationship	12	11,2	14,4	10,9
Father-child relationship	13,6	14,2	14,4	13,5

MULTIPLE MEDIATIONS MODEL AND MEDIATED MODERATION

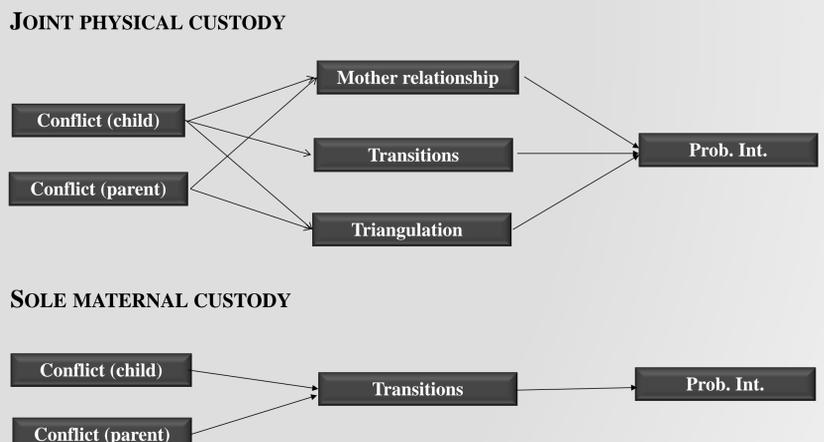
Table 3: Multiple mediations model and mediated moderation

Conflict (VI)	Médiateur (MED)	Joint physical custody (N=37)			Sole maternal custody (N=75)			Moderation Z'
		Alpha VI→MED	Beta MED→VD	Z'	Alpha VI→MED	Beta MED→VD	Z'	
Child	Mother rel.	0,26**	0,17 NS	1,53**	0,07 NS	0,00 NS	0,01 NS	1,50**
	Father rel.	0,08 NS	0,10 NS	0,56 NS	0,21*	0,02 NS	0,20 NS	0,18 NS
	Triangulation	0,60***	0,08 NS	0,96*	0,40***	0,00 NS	0,03 NS	0,74 +
	Transitions	0,33***	0,28*	1,93**	0,11 NS	0,22*	1,06*	1,29*
Parent	Mother rel.	0,24 NS	0,13 NS	1,25*	0,02 NS	0,01 NS	0,13 NS	1,24*
	Father rel.	0,15 NS	0,12 NS	0,83 NS	0,19*	0,01 NS	0,11 NS	0,59 NS
	Triangulation	0,28 NS	0,03 NS	0,34 NS	0,09 NS	0,05 NS	0,51 NS	0,12 NS
	Transitions	0,33***	0,17 NS	1,58**	0,36***	0,22*	1,95**	0,44 NS

*p < .05 ; **p < .01 ; ***p < .001

INDIRECT ASSOCIATIONS BETWEEN CONFLICT AND CHILDREN'S ADJUSTMENT

Figure 1: Indirect relationships between conflict and internalizing problems for each custody arrangement



CONCLUSION

The results of the study contribute to refine our understanding of children's adjustment in sole maternal- and joint physical arrangements, focusing on the mediating role of familial process variable between conflicts and children's adjustment.

The influence of a joint physical custody does not follow a simple trajectory. Findings indicated that child problems are similar in sole maternal- and joint physical arrangements. The data support the mediating effects of quality of the relationship with mother, triangulation and transitions on children's internalizing problems, especially in joint custody families.

For example, the mediating role of transitions explains the association between conflict and children's adjustment. Professionals could recommend avoiding personal contact as an important strategy for reducing a child's exposure to conflict. Transitions could be made at school. Issues surrounding family processes require further investigation because of the important consequences they hold for children's development.

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Custody Evaluators' and Judges' Social Representation of the Best Interests of the Child Principle

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Introduction

- In determining or recommending custody arrangements, judges and mental health professionals are guided by the best interests of the child (BIC), a standard that has been criticized for being too vague and subjective.
- Decisions and recommendations concerning custody and access are based on limited science (Emery, Otto, & O'Donohue, 2005; Saini, 2008; Tippins & Wittmann, 2005) and are rather influenced by values and beliefs shared by professionals (Artis, 2004; Kelly, 1997; Krauss & Sales, 2000) in a specific social and historical context (Dolgin, 1996; Mason, 1994).
- To try and understand key trends concerning custody and access decisions and recommendations, this research examines judges' and experts' social representation of the BIC principle in the context of high conflict separation and custody dispute.**

Methodology

A quota sampling technique was used in order to diversify the sample. Variables of interest were professional affiliation, level of experience, sex and age. The semi-structured interviews focused on the definition of the best interests of the child, the respondents' opinion on various issues (e.g. custody and access for toddlers), and two case studies (a case from the respondent practice and a fictional case). Data analysis was carried out using thematic content and comparative qualitative analyses.

Table 1. Custody Evaluators' Demographics and Professional Characteristics (n=16)

Respondents	Gender	Age Category	Educational Background	Years in practice	C&A evaluations during whole career	C&A evaluations : % of practice	
Social Workers	SW1	M	56-60	Bachelor	14	600	100%
	SW2	M	46-50	Master	2	30	40%
	SW3	M	61-65	Master	19	150	30%
	SW4	F	56-60	Bachelor	9	+ 230	100%
	SW5	F	46-50	Bachelor	5	150	80%
	SW6	F	36-40	Bachelor	6	170	80%
	SW7	F	56-60	Master	5	6	One evaluation/year
Psychologists	SW8	F	61-65	Master	30	+ 1000	80%
	SW9	F	31-35	Bachelor	6	30-35	40-50%
	PSY1	M	46-50	Master	14	30	25-30%
	PSY2	M	51-55	Master	24	200	10%
	PSY3	F	66 and +	Master	42	800-1000	80%
	PSY4	F	56-60	Master	22	1500-2000	30%
	PSY5	F	30 and less	Master	2	12	25%
	PSY6	F	56-60	Master	31	700	20%
	PSY7	F	36-40	Ph.D.	7	90-100	50%

Table 2. Quebec Superior Court Judges' Demographics and Professional Characteristics (n=11)

Respondents	Gender	Age Category	Years in practice	C&A number in career	C&A: % of practice	Prior practice : family law?
JU1	F	46-50	6-10	250	50%	yes
JU2	F	-	6-10	-	-	-
JU3	F	56-60	16-20	Unknown	60%	no
JU4	F	-	6-10	Unknown	10-15%	yes
JU5	F	51-55	11-15	80-100	20-25%	yes
JU6	F	51-55	1-5	50	50%	yes
JU7	M	56-60	1-5	50	10%	little
JU8	M	46-50	1-5	100	20% to 80% depending on the district	no
JU9	M	66 and +	11-15	180	65%	yes
JU10	M	56-60	6-10	40	5%	no
JU11	M	51-55	6-10	100	10%	little

Results

The analysis of the spontaneous definition and main issues regarding the BIC reveals 4 principles that are competing when a decision or recommendations are made (see Figure 1): continuity which can be seen as continuity in the relationship with both parents (maximization of contacts) or as a *status quo* (stability of the environment and preference for the primary caregiver), protection of the child (e.g. from conflict, violence, or a parent with mental health disorder) and autonomy, which refers to the importance given to children's point of view. Respondents were asked to take a stand on various issues (see Table 3). Crucial importance is given to the continuity of the relationship with both parents (even in cases of important conflict, no communication between the parents, and violence).

Figure 1. Competing Principles and Related Issues

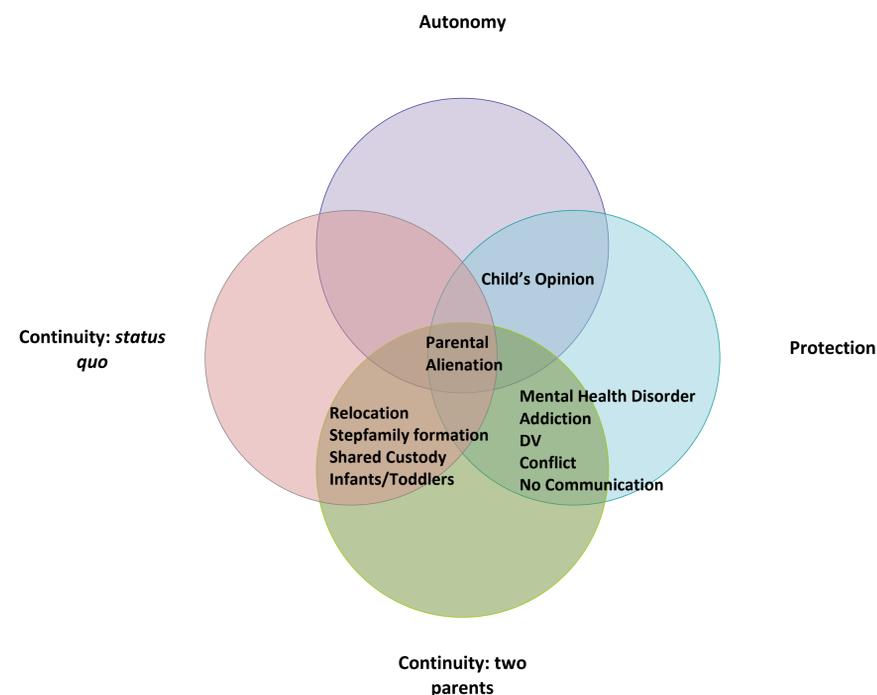


Table 3. Most and Least Salient Standpoints on three Issues Regarding the Best Interests of the Child Principle

Issues	Most Salient Standpoints	Explanations	Examples	Least Salient Standpoints
1. Infants and Toddlers	Status quo ≥ Two parents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Frequent but short periods of time apart from the primary caretaker (usually the mother) As the baby gets older: more access with the father, but gradually A preference for mothers for infant or toddler care or a more gender neutral point of view do not influence this standpoint 	"In my opinion, the child should be with the parent who can best meet his needs, whether it's the mother or the father. [...] What's important for me, for a very young child, is for him to have frequent and close contacts with the other parent." (PSY7)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shared custody could be appropriate for infants or toddlers in some circumstances Shared custody is never appropriate for infants or toddlers.
	2. Domestic Violence	Two parents > Protection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> True intimate terrorism is rare and many allegations are exaggerated or false A violent husband or partner is not necessarily a bad father 	"Bidirectional violence is often perceived as domestic violence. Police interventions are very common in my caseload, but violence is often limited to the break-up turmoil." (SW5)
3. Adolescent's opinion	Autonomy > Protection (judges)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is hard/impossible to impose custody arrangements on adolescents. The opinion of a child aged 12 years and over is crucial although not exclusive (Quebec Court of Appeal) 	"The adolescent's opinion is not really an issue because if a 14 or 15- year-old has a firm idea about his custody arrangements, I have to think twice before ordering otherwise. I could create another problem, he could run away." (JU1)	
	Protection > Autonomy (experts)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adolescents aren't mature enough to understand everything that is at stake in a custody conflict 	"I don't think a teenager of 12 or even 16 years old has the maturity to know what is in his best interests." (SW9)	

Discussion

- This research confirms a key trend toward maximization of contacts and shared custody (McIntosh & Smyth, 2012), with the exception of the period of infancy where there's still a preference for the primary caregiver.
- Results on the violence issue are of particular concern in light of data raising questions on lack of detection of DV by the Court and appropriate supervision of access (Bemiller, 2008; Kernic, Monary-Ernsdorff, Koepsell, & Holt, 2005; Morrill, Dai, Dunn, Sung, & Smith, 2005; Shaffer & Bala, 2003).
- Judges' and experts' opinions are more similar than different (with the exception of the adolescent's opinion), suggesting a mutual influence between the judiciary and psychosocial field.

Avenues for Research

- Future research should address the differentiation of types of high conflict separations on a continuum of severity and distinguishing various types of DV.
- More research is needed on various issues regarding custody and access and children's adjustment (ex. consequences of imposed shared custody by the Court).
- This research highlights the need to study consequences of custody evaluation and decisions made by the Court for families and children through longitudinal research.





An Analysis of Long Term Clients within Supervised Access Programs



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Background

Supervised visit and exchange programs are not intended to be a long-term solution to maintaining parent-child contact after separation and divorce.

Supervised access is considered a short-term solution, whether or not it seems feasible that unsupervised access will be possible in the long run (Bailey, 1999).

Thoennes and Pearson's 2000 study showed benefits during visitation at the centers but not after supervised visitation ended.

SAP in Ontario

Supervised Access Program in Ontario implemented supervised services (access and exchanges) in a 14-site pilot project between 1992 and 1994 (Park et al., 1997).

Park et al., (1997) found that SAP was beneficial for short term services, mostly when a child was being reintroduced to an absent parent.

The average time in supervised access was 7.7 months.

Parents most likely to use the service for a longer period had unmanageable psychiatric disabilities, suffered substance abuse, or feared their child's abduction (Park et al., 1997).

Study Objectives

- To gain an understanding the context of long-term clients within the supervised access program
- Identify factors that influence their extended stay in service,
- Determine if typologies/patterns exist
- Explore views of service providers of long term clients

Methods

Secondary data analysis of aggregated service data collected by the Ministry of the Attorney General.

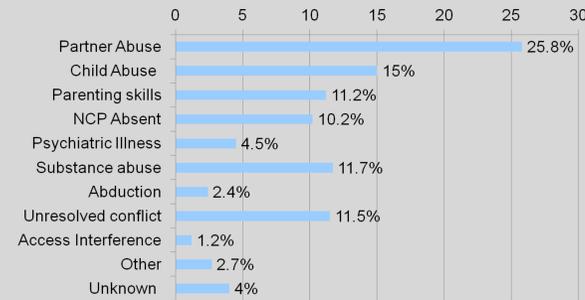
The sample was all cases in Ontario since 2001 across 38 centres with a total of 14,989 cases.

Multivariate analysis was used to predict long term clients at intake.

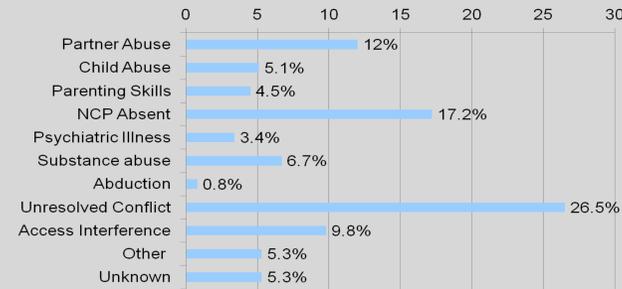
Focus groups were conducted in three regions with Supervised Access Coordinators from across Ontario.

Reasons for Service

Factors Identified by Custodial Parent



Factors Identified by Non-Custodial Parent



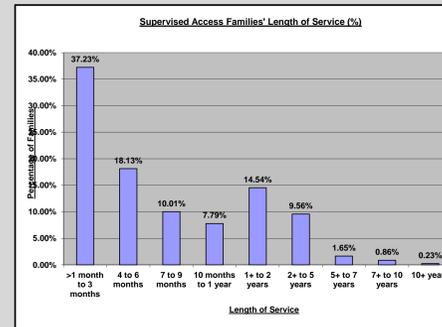
Average Time in SAP

Average time in SAP:

Average time between first and last visit/exchange= 304 days

Average total amount of time for visits/exchanges = 8 hours

Average time between each exchange / visit = 12.7 days



Factors associated with long term clients:

- The age of the child
- A parent with a history of psychiatric illness
- Concerns regarding parenting ability
- History of alcohol or drug abuse
- Whether the parties pay fees
- Concerns regarding child abuse

Implications

Type of court order such as interim or final court order or unspecified court orders can impact length of program use.

Need for exit plan and goals to be developed and established at intake.

Service providers should consider a review of cases every six months.

Need for more professional collaboration across services and more support for clients.

Need to streamline referral process to include additional supports for those individuals involved in litigation.

Need for additional research to explore the views of children and parents involved in supervised access and exchange services to explore optimal transitioning out of the program.

Next Steps

Development of Best Practices for working with long-term clients

Tips for what Centres can do to help ease family transitions from service

Best Practices for giving information to families vs. referral Ideas around how to manage increasing case loads within the reality of long-term families

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Factors related to length of service (Regression based on statistically significant factors)

Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.122 ^a	.015	.013	460.67073

a. Predictors: (Constant), Assessment Currently being Conducted?, Criminal Trial Pending?, NCP Agrees with Referral?, Court Order?, Previous Clinical Assessment?, Separation Agreement?, Voluntary CAS Involvement?, Ongoing Legal Proceedings?, Domestic Violence?, CP Agrees with Referral?, Restraining Order?

ANOVA ^a					
Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	20981165.527	11	1907378.684	8.988	.000 ^b
Residual	137989945.9	77	212127.551		
Total	1399870811.5	88			

a. Dependent Variable: Days from First to Last Visit/Exchange
b. Predictors: (Constant), Assessment Currently being Conducted?, Criminal Trial Pending?, NCP Agrees with Referral?, Court Order?, Previous Clinical Assessment?, Separation Agreement?, Voluntary CAS Involvement?, Ongoing Legal Proceedings?, Domestic Violence?, CP Agrees with Referral?, Restraining Order?

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error			
(Constant)	363.122	16.268		19.878	.000
Court Order?	9.040	14.492	.008	.624	.533
Ongoing Legal Proceedings?	-70.832	12.820	-.072	-5.525	.000
Separation Agreement?	23.552	16.595	.018	1.419	.156
CP Agrees with Referral?	37.375	16.462	.032	2.270	.023
NCP Agrees with Referral?	-22.693	13.683	-.023	-1.659	.097
Voluntary CAS Involvement?	-48.507	21.590	-.029	-2.247	.025
Criminal Trial Pending?	-56.468	26.806	-.029	-2.107	.035
Domestic Violence?	-41.326	17.076	-.035	-2.420	.016
Restraining Order?	-2.399	18.573	-.002	-.129	.897
Previous Clinical Assessment?	84.601	20.654	.051	4.096	.000
Assessment Currently being Conducted?	10.403	25.977	.005	.400	.689

a. Dependent Variable: Days from First to Last Visit/Exchange

Focus Group Results

Long term clients tend to have court orders which lack detail and are unspecific in terms of setting a timeline for the client's use of the center. Likewise, these clients tend to have court orders which require them to remain in service long term.

Long term clients are identified as comfortable with the service and status quo. They tend to value the security and predictability that the service offers. They experience fearfulness of the impact of no longer attending the program and may have fear-based in responses as to why they have been in program.

They tend to have final court orders and experience limited financial resources as well as a lack of understanding of, and challenges in, navigating the court system.

Long term clients tend to be parents who are lacking resources or ability to return to court.

The relationship which is developed between staff and long term clients is qualitatively different. Workers find it more challenging to maintain neutrality with long term clients as these relationships develop.

Low-Income Individuals and Access to Justice

- “Poverty creates an abrasive interface with society; poor people are always bumping into sharp legal things” (Wexler, 1970)
- Low-income individuals are more likely to experience pressing non-legal issues (i.e. precarious housing) than typical legal clients and they often struggle with addressing their legal issues due to lack of resources. This exacerbates the aggravating nature of the law on their non-legal issues and results in a cascade of negative effects, as socioeconomic problems tend to occur in clusters.
- Canadians have a “high prevalence of justiciable problems that are not being resolved...[among] lower income people almost 50% had experienced one more problems with legal aspects that they had considered serious and difficult to resolve within the previous 3 years...two-thirds did not receive assistance for problems experienced” (Trebilcock, 2008, p.99-100).
- Currently, social support, health, and legal services are usually offered separately. This is ineffective for addressing the multifaceted issues affecting vulnerable individuals involved with the law.

Downtown Legal Services (DLS)

- DLS is a community legal clinic operated by the Faculty of Law at the University of Toronto that provides free services to clients who meet strict financial eligibility criteria established by Legal Aid Ontario, the clinic’s primary funder. Clients are primarily very low-income individuals.
- The clinic offers assistance in five areas of law: criminal law, family law, refugee and immigration law, tenant housing and university affairs.
- Approximately 140 law students each year run outreach programs, public legal education seminars, complete phone intake screenings of potential clients and perform casework under the close supervision of staff lawyers.
- In January 2013, DLS began offering social work assists to legal files by Masters of Social Work placement students from the Factor-Inwentash Faculty of Social Work.

Social Work at DLS

- Not a standalone program so does not take on external clients or provide counselling.
- MSW students are involved in a variety of clinic activities including phone intake, satellite clinics and facilitating workshops to law students about social work and related skills.
- The main function of the social work program is to provide therapeutic support to clients.

Therapeutic Support

- Support that aims to address pressing non-legal needs and relieve related stress.
- Activities can include:
 - Identifying appropriate non-legal referrals and assisting clients in accessing support
 - Managing client expectations
 - Supporting clients through periods of uncertainty and transition
 - Case management

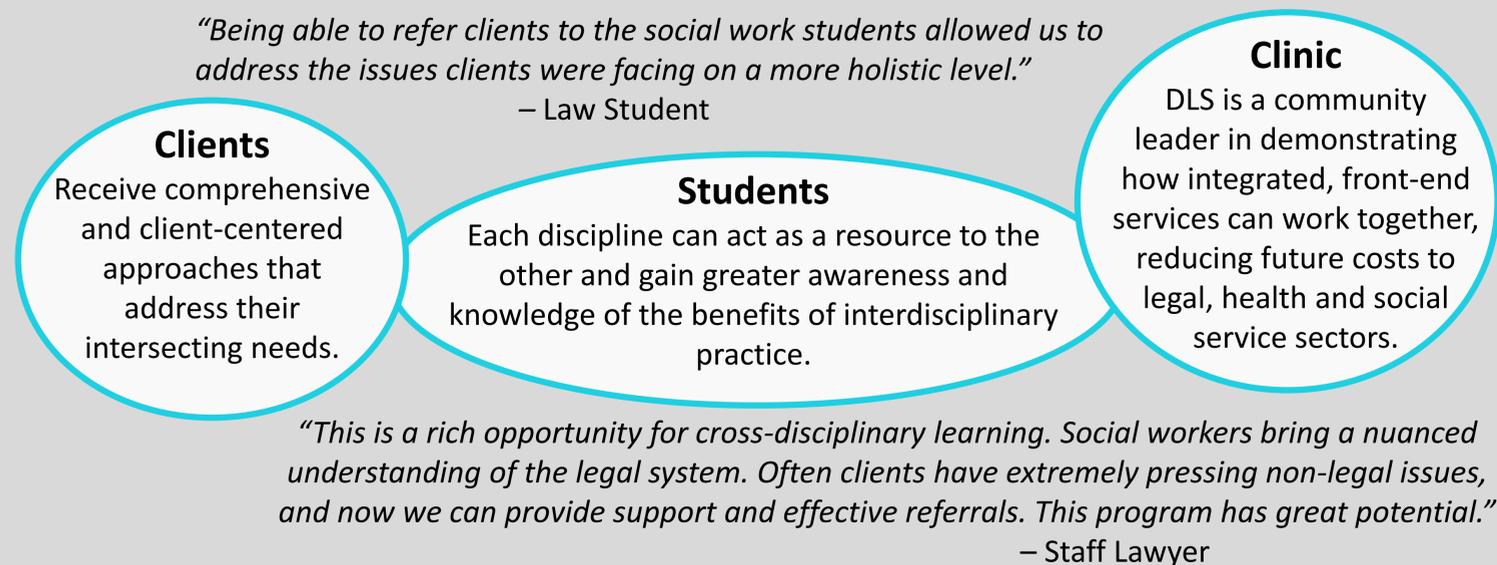
Existing Models of Interdisciplinary Practice

- Social work services have been integrated at several student legal clinics across Canada in a way that is tailored to match each clinic’s unique mandate and priorities.
- The proportion of direct and indirect work depends on the organizational mandate and goals, nature of and capacity for supervision, and the service needs of clients.
- Student turnover presents a challenge to providing long-term counselling, so many clinics opt to provide short-term support and connections to other professionals.

Role of Social Work: Community Development vs. Direct Client Services

- Clinics have used social work students primarily for:
 - Community development and systemic advocacy, through policy and research projects, community outreach and rights education initiatives.
 - Direct services to clients including intake screening, providing brief counselling and support, and making referrals to other service agencies.

Benefits to Stakeholders



Duty to Report vs. Solicitor-Client Privilege

The interdisciplinary interaction of ethical and professional obligations can present a practice challenge in clinics
Example: Does privilege trump a social worker’s duty under *CFSA* s. 72 to report potential or known harm to a child to CAS?

- disclosure obligations will vary based on the role of the social worker within the clinic (i.e. assisting lawyer with legal case vs. stand-alone counselling).
- It is crucial for both lawyers and social workers to clarify their respective roles and identify possible problems that may arise.
- Although ethical issues can be challenging to navigate, this should not prevent legal clinics from providing social work services, as there are many benefits to adopting an interdisciplinary approach.

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An Evaluation Study of the Overcoming Barriers Family Camp

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Background

Empirical research reports that children of divorce show better overall functioning, psychological adjustment and long term well being when they maintain close emotional bonds, frequent contact and quality relationships with both parents (Kelly & Lamb, 2000; Pruett, Cowan, Cowan & Diamond, 2012).

In the past decade, family courts have seen a significant increase in the number of parent-child contact problems and allegations of unjustified rejection of a parent post-separation (Bala, Hunt & McCarney, 2010).

Prevalence rates of children who resist or refuse contact with a parent remain unclear and vary depending on operational definition and sampling strategy (Saini, Johnston, Fidler & Bala, 2012).

Children who resist or refuse contact with a parent post separation or divorce represent one of the greatest challenges for parents, legal and mental health professionals and the court. Professionals are challenged with how to appropriately assess, manage and treat these complex cases (Fidler, Bala & Saini, 2013).

Reunification therapy is a specialized therapeutic intervention often recommended or court ordered when contact issues emerge. It aims to:

- Improve a child's psychological health;
- Improve family functioning by restoring parenting, co-parenting and parent-child roles;
- Improve communication patterns and conflict resolution skills;
- Address cognitive distortions in perceptions and judgments and;
- Help ameliorate a child's relationship with both parents

(Johnston, 2005; Johnston, Walters & Friedlander, 2001; Fidler et al., 2013; Friedlander & Walters, 2010; Sullivan et al., 2010; Warshak, 2010).



Overcoming Barriers Family Camp

Overcoming Barriers Family Camp (OBFC) is a five-day/four overnight family camp experience held in upstate Vermont.

The program delivers intensive treatment for high conflict families where children resist or refuse contact with a parent.

OBFC is led by experienced MHP's, camp directors and counselors.

Treatment includes the combination of:

1. Psycho-education
2. Clinical interventions using different family combinations
3. An enjoyable camp experience



Dining Hall: Common Ground Center

Purpose of Evaluation

In July of 2013, a formal evaluation was completed to determine:

- OBFC's implementation relative to the program objectives.
- The experiences and outcomes of children and families who have participated in the program.
- Clients' satisfaction of the program and overall camp experience.

Methodology

All camp participants were invited to take part in the evaluation.

Methodology included a mixed methods evaluation including a pre-experimental pre-post test within group design and qualitative interviews.

Parents individually completed pre and post anonymous online surveys via Fluidsurvey.

Qualitative interviews were conducted with all camp participants on the last day by a third party independent evaluation team.

Demographics

- 5 families participated in the camp.
- 5 fathers and mothers completed pre-post test surveys.



- All parent dyads were previously married.
- 100% of parties report no intentions of reconciling with the other parent.
- In this group, fathers were the rejected parents in the sample.
- 11 children participated in the interviews.
- Children ranged in ages from 10 to 17 years of age.

Parents' Reasons for Attending OBFC

- Improve interparental communication and find "common ground"
- Reduce level of conflict between parents.
- Facilitate "*a relationship with a child who has totally rejected one parent*".
- Provide education on effects of alienation on both parent and children
- Keep parents child-focused.
- Have an independent, third party observe parent-child interactions.
- Provide their children with skills to cope with the separation, meet other children in the same situation, and allow them to feel "better supported" throughout the divorce process.

"I hope it will allow the children to establish some independence from their mother. I hope it will enable them to tell her to say "stop it!" when their mother tells them terrible things about me."

Parents' Qualitative Impressions

Qualitative interviews revealed most parents were satisfied with the professionalism encountered among camp staff and the mutual support received by other participants:

- *"I believe that things can get better if both myself and my co-parent use some of the skills that we have learned and continue to work with professionals in the near future."*
- *"I felt safe and comfortable in the program"*
- *"I felt like, when the kids had a problem, there were competent staff available, that when they came to me, I could hand them off and their voices would be heard. This might be a counsellor who would give them emotional support or a therapist."*

In several cases parents relied on each other for support which assisted them in moving forward in with their own challenges with their family situation.

Others felt the lack of privacy was problematic:



- *“Lack of privacy and being placed in the company of women who I liked, but were also who were bitter and entrenched in the divorce process. Many times I just ached to get away and talk about something positive.”*

Some parents reported concerns of the lack of opportunity to interact with their children.

Participants Overall Goals

While some parties reported accomplishing their goals of participating in the program, others did not.

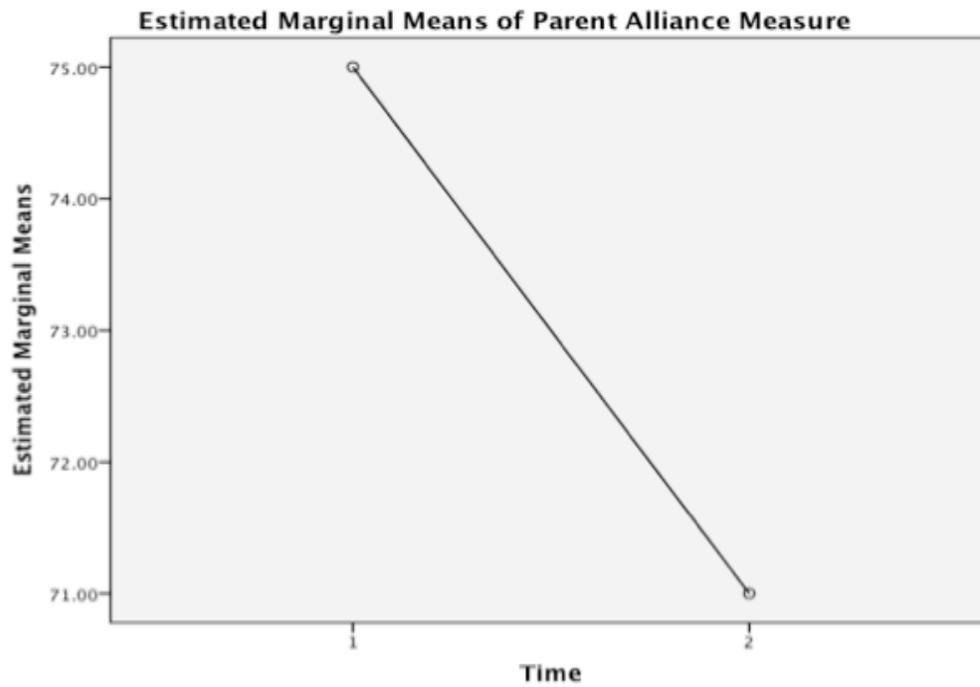
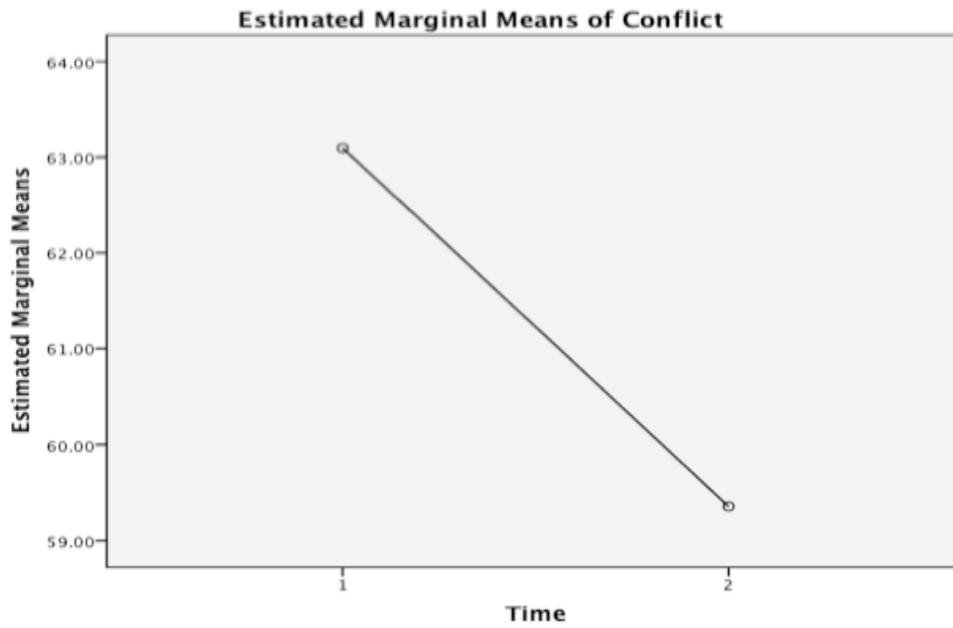
One party suggested that while their co-parent was cooperative throughout the program, he did not believe she was committed to their co-parenting agreement, which affected both their relationship as well as their relationship with their child.

Several parents suggested that the ability to co-parent after leaving the program would determine the true effects of skills learned.

“My goal was that my kids would gain insight into their situation and that such insight would lead to an improved relationship with me. I can't answer this question without (1) knowing the recommendations that will come from the camp staff and (2) seeing whether there is any improvement in my relationship with my kids once we return home.”



Post Conflict, Alliance and Quality of Affect





Note: Although conflict, parental alliance and quality of affect changed in the desired direction, none of these were statistically significant, as none had sufficient power for detecting differences due to small samples.

Parents who felt closer to their family members:

- Were hopeful this would continue after the program.
- Believed that the family unit as a whole was strengthened due to the shared experiences within the program.
- Reported being better able to remain child-focused and move forward in a collaborative fashion with their co-parent.

Children's Feedback

"It (the program) is both helpful and unhelpful depending on your relationship with your parents."

- In most cases, children found it easier to interact with other children rather than the parents.

"Meeting other children from divorced families who deal with having relationship issues with their father was helpful."



- Some children exchanged emails to maintain contact and offer ongoing mutual support.
- Children offered the following advice for other children:
 - *You don't have to be nice, but be civil to your parents.*
 - *Follow the directions of staff.*
 - *Just hang out with your friends and try to avoid who you don't want to see.*
 - *Stay positive.*
 - *Treat others as you want to be treated.*
 - *Try to be a little bit more open and not cynical about your family situation*

Implications

- Results suggest a need to provide more information about expectations of camp prior to attending the program.
- Limitation of this study includes a small sample size, which increases risk of Type II error for quantitative results.
- This evaluation provides a blueprint for evaluating the complexity of reintegration interventions.

Next Steps

- Create fidelity checklist for process and implementation of the intervention to better capture outcomes.
- Replicate pre/post test with July 2014 camp participants.
- Complete follow-up surveys with previous participants.

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Evaluating the Involvement of Children in the Montreal Parenting Coordination Project: Preliminary results

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What is PC?

Parenting coordination (PC) is a child-focused and non adversarial dispute resolution process that is court ordered or agreed on by divorced and separated parents who have an ongoing pattern of high conflict and/or litigation about their children (American Psychological Association, 2012). It is designed to :

- Help parents implement and comply with court orders/parenting plans;
- Make timely decisions that consider the children's needs*;
- Reduce the amount of conflict between parents;
- Reduce the re-litigation rate concerning child-related issues.

A parenting coordinator is a highly trained professional from a law or a psychosocial background, preferably a qualified family mediator. PC is 1) non-confidential, as the parenting coordinator is responsible to report to the court; 2) focused on the child's needs; 3) directive and goal-oriented; 4) highly structured (Boyan & Termini, 1999; Mitcham-Smith & Henry, 2007)

*Not possible in the jurisdiction of the province of Quebec, as no arbitration in Family Law is allowed.

The Montreal PC Pilot Project

Since the beginning of 2013, the Ministry of Justice of Quebec has been providing 10 high conflict families with free of charge PC. The main goals of this pilot are to experiment with a new model of interdisciplinary collaborative process (between the juridical and the psychosocial professionals) and to conduct an outcome study on the effectiveness of PC within the Quebec Superior Court. Two trained parenting coordinators are in charge of delivering this innovative case management process.

Objectives and Methodology

The aim of this thesis is to document (qualitatively and quantitatively) the impacts of PC on the children, as practically no other study has investigated this before . The eldest child of each family and both parents are met twice: at the beginning of the intervention (Time 1) and at the termination of the PC process (Time 2). Children 7 years and older and parents fill out a series of questionnaires aimed to measure :

- Interparental conflict;
- Type of coparenting relationship
- The parent-child relationship
- The children's psychological well-being
- The feeling of being caught

A semi-structured interview with both parents, the children and the parenting coordinator at Time 2 will provide information about their perceptions of PC and of the inclusion of children in the process.

Questionnaires administered:

- *Children's Perception of Interparental Conflict* (Grych & al., 1992);
- *Caught in the Middle* (Buchanan, Maccoby & Dornbush, 1991);
- *Child Depression Inventory* (Kovacs, 1983);
- *Questions on Coparenting* (Maccoby, Depber, & Mnookin, 1990);
- *Children Behavior Checklist* (Achenbach, 1991).

The involvement of Children in PC

There are no rules/guidelines as to whether children should be included or not in the PC process. According to Kelly (2013), when appropriate and done wisely, the inclusion of children in PC can bring benefits to the child as well as contribute to the efficacy of the intervention. Importantly, the wishes and opinion of the child are heard directly, and not through the subjective report of the parents.

Within the Montreal PC Project, all children five years and older will be met at least once by the PC.

Preliminary Results

Data collection for this project is on going. So far, 3 of the 10 families have completed the PC process, having been met for the Time 2 interview.

TABLE 1: CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SAMPLE

Characteristics	Fathers		Mothers	
	n	%	n	%
Ethnic origin				
French Canadian (Quebec)	6	66.7	8	80
Other	3	33.3	2	20
Parents' Education				
High School or less	2	22.2	2	20
Professional diploma	2	22.2	2	20
Technical diploma	1	11.1	2	20
University degree	4	44.4	4	40
Parents' Income				
Less than \$20 000	2	22.2	3	30
\$20 000-\$40 000	1	11.1	4	40
\$40 000-\$60 000	3	33.3	3	30
\$60 000 or more	3	33.3	0	0
Type of custody				
Mostly with mother	3		30	
Mostly with father	1		10	
Shared custody	6		60	
Average length of relationship			9.1 years	
Average time since separation			5.7 years	
Number of children per union			2.2	
Age of children (N=10)				
0-6 years-old			3	
7-10 years-old			1	
11-17 years-old			6	

Table 2: BASELINE MEASURES

Scale	Time 1	
According to mother (n=8)		
CBCL (Clinical level > 70)		
Internalizing behaviors (T score)	M	65.9
	SD	(9.7)
Externalizing behaviors (T score)	M	62.4
	SD	(9.7)
According to fathers (n=7)		
CBCL (Clinical level > 70)		
Internalizing behaviors (T score)	M	56.6
	SD	(11.2)
Externalizing behaviors (T score)	M	51.4
	SD	(14.7)
According to children (n=6)		
CDI		
Depression scale	M	10.8
	SD	(6.2)
CPIC		
Children's perception of conflict		
Characteristics of conflict (0 to 38)	M	23.5
	SD	(5.9)
CIM (score range 0 to 17)		
Feeling of being caught	M	10.2
	SD	(2.1)

Qualitative Observations

- ◆ So far, 2 children have been met through a semi-structured interview. Both think that the CP should meet the children during the process and that they should have a say:

"I was glad to meet him, to know who he was and who my parents were seeing." (age 12)

- ◆ Although they both didn't feel there was any improvement in the situation between their parents, they think this intervention could be useful for other families if some changes were made.

"It could be useful, but only if the parents really want to get involved." (age 13)

- ◆ So far, both PCs have said they have found it useful to meet the children. They also think that meeting the children has had an influence on how they understand the family situation and how they intervene with the parents.



Examining the Role of Interim Parenting Plan Custody Evaluations

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Background

During custody disputes, courts will often request information on disputing parties' areas of concern including:

- Child development
- Parenting styles and behavior
- Family systems
- Psychopathology
- Issues regarding the parent-child relationship
- The emotional well-being of the family to determine the child's best interests

(Drozd, Olesen, & Saini, 2013; Luftman, Veltkamp, Clark, Lannacon & Snooks, 2005).

Qualified mental health professionals are typically retained to conduct custody evaluations and provide the court with information and recommendations.

At times, an evaluator cannot make final recommendations due to a lack of information and/or anticipated changes in circumstances. Examples include: parent requiring substance abuse treatment or ruptured parent-child relationship that may improve post-therapeutic services.

Recommendations can be problematic in cases where clinical concern(s) identified can be addressed within a relatively short period of time leading itself to changes in circumstance and potentially different recommendations by the time the matter goes to trial.

Office of the Children's Lawyer

The Office of the Children's Lawyer (OCL) is a law office in the Ministry of the Attorney General in Ontario that delivers programs in the administration of justice on behalf of children.

Lawyers in the office represent children in various areas of law including child custody and access disputes, child protection proceedings and civil litigation. (Ministry of Attorney General, 2013)

OCL's Pilot Initiative

The Office of the Children's Lawyer (OCL) has been conducting Interim Reports as a pilot initiative on selected cases.

Purpose of OCL Interim Report:

- To provide pertinent information to the court gathered during the course of the custody evaluation.
- To delay the final recommendations until the family has had a chance to work on interim tasks resulting from clinical issues identified.
- Results of interim clinical tasks may impact final recommendations provided.

Study Objectives

- To explore the different types of interim report models being used by custody evaluators across the province on Ontario
- To explore the circumstances related to the decision to use an interim report approach.
- To highlight the different factors that custody evaluators consider when deciding to file an interim report.
- To explore the experiences of custody evaluators in using the interim report approach
- To highlight the strengths and limitations of using interim reports and its potential value in the court system.

Methods

- All active clinical agents of the OCL received an invitation to participate in an anonymous online survey via FluidSurvey.
- Participants responded to multiple choice and qualitative open ended questions
- A total n=59 participants completed the online survey.
- The sample consisted mostly of social workers (92%).
- All participants were clinical panel members of the OCL.
- The majority of participants have been conducting custody evaluations for more than 4 years (66%).



- The majority work in urban settings (81%).

Results

Over the past 12 months, 41% of participants indicated their use of interim reports increased.

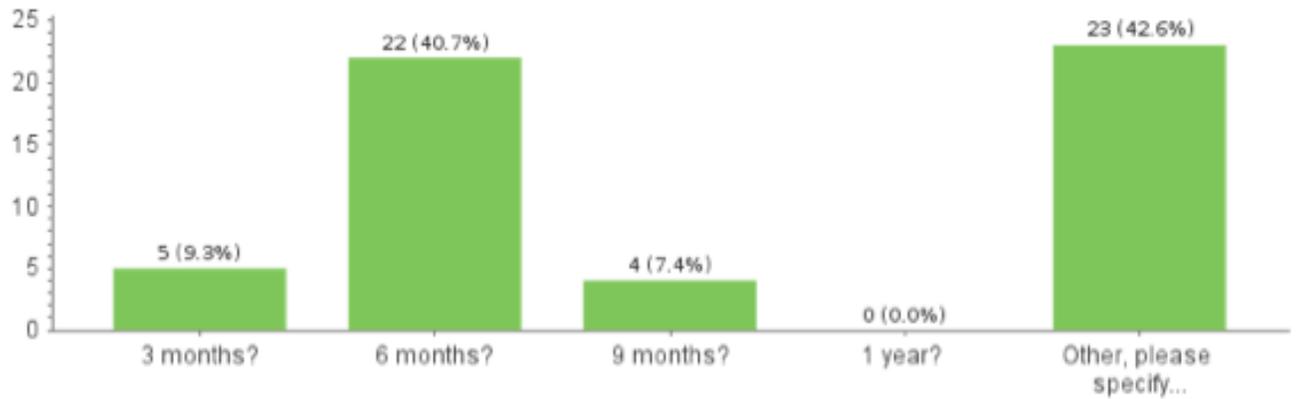
Participants varied in their definitions of interim reports:

- Parties are stalled in the process but not yet stable enough to consider final recommendations;
 - Mirrors longer report, provides direction to the court but delays in making final recommendations;
 - A clinical “stepping stone” to allow some sort of intervention or change to take place and re-evaluating after a period of time;
 - A pause for a period of 2-12 months;
 - Unknown or Confusion (e.g. “CAS begins investigating”, “when MHP requires more time”, “helpful when you don’t have an understanding of the issues” “supervisors instructions” etc.)
-

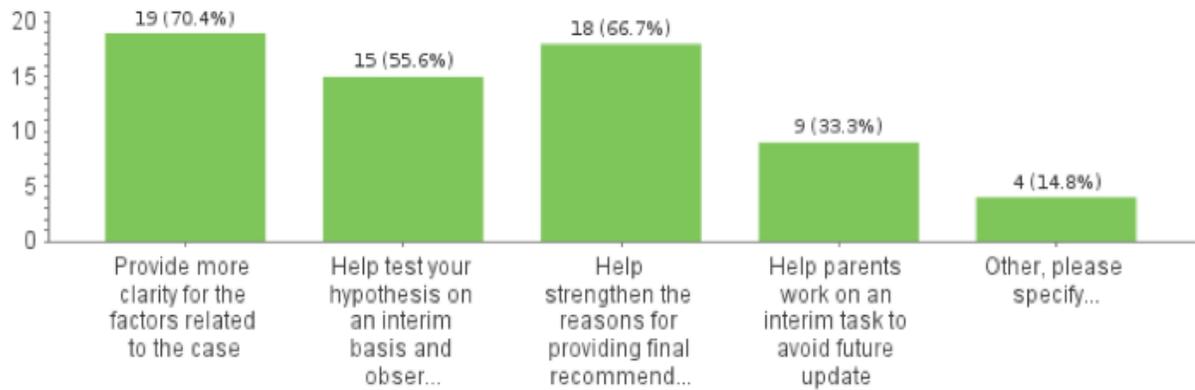
MHP considered the following factors for potentially conducting an Interim Report:

Response	Chart	Percentage	Count
A long period of time where a child has had no access with a parent;		90.6%	48
Need for therapeutic access;		84.9%	45
Counselling to work on a strained relationship		67.9%	36
Cases where a child does not know a parent (time to introduce and develop relationship);		88.7%	47
Logistical preparation		30.2%	16
Prescribed structure for communication to reduce conflict		37.7%	20
Prescribed interim recommendations		58.5%	31
Test for Accountability		24.5%	13
Other, please specify...		20.8%	11
Total Responses			53

Length of time for follow-up:



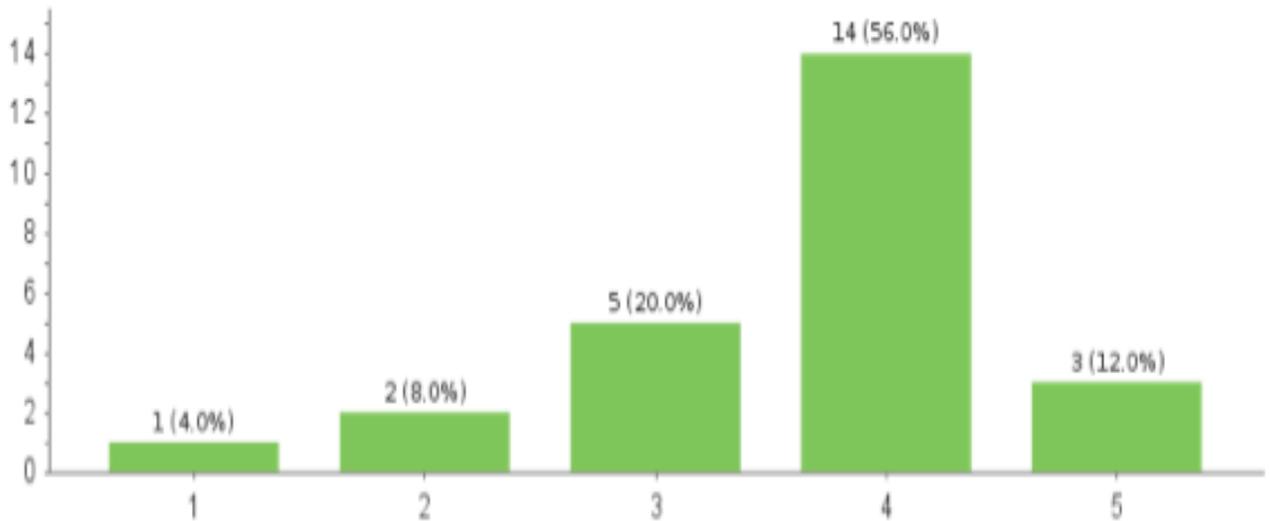
Benefits of Interim Reports:



90% of MHP were unaware if the court found the process helpful or unhelpful



Satisfaction with Interim Reports



Participants' Overall Feedback

A good idea for appropriate cases but mostly I find the full report is necessary in order for the lawyers to settle the cases after the disclosure meeting.

Would need to have a limited timeframe or else children and their families would be unable to have closure.

I think the Interim Report is valuable as long as the circumstances to using it are clear. Whatever goals/tasks are set have to be ones the parties can reasonably complete in at most 9 months.

I can see that it would be useful to allow a family to work on short-term goals such as counseling before recommendations can be made.

I like having the option for an interim report to test theories/hypothesis and to give estranged parents a chance to get to know their children and vice versa.

Limit use to specific cases where there is a clear reason for doing it.

There needs to be much greater clarity about the process for me to consider using it in future cases.

It would be helpful to have a handout describing the process/rules for the lawyers and parties.

More guidelines about expectations and methods for doing this process

Implications

Most participants perceive this model to be helpful and applicable.

Interim reports have the potential to provide an alternative approach for conducting custody evaluations in selected cases.

There are a variety of approaches used across the province in terms of the selection criteria for interim reports, timing, issues addressed, and feedback to parents and the courts.

There remains a lack of standardized approaches for conducting these alternative reports.

Next Steps

The development of guidelines and protocols are essential to standardize the methods for conducting interim reports.

More consideration about any potential ethical dilemmas of conducting interim reports (e.g. the risk of dual relationships).

Feedback from the courts is essential to assist in determining the feasibility of this approach for selected cases.

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