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Recent Research Abstracts

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POST-SEPARATION PARENTING

Smyth, Bruce (2005): "Parent-child contact schedules after divorce", *Family Matters*, No 69 Spring/Summer 2004-2005, pp. 32-43

Most studies indicate that the interests of children after divorce are generally best served when children can maintain continuing and frequent contact with both parents who can cooperate, or at least 'encapsulate' their conflict. However, there seems to be a widespread belief in Australia that when parents separate, children usually see their father every other weekend. But is this the case? In this article, the author provides a 'big picture' snapshot of contact schedules in Australia, and suggests the use of more creative, child sensitive arrangements to help maximize the fit between children's and parents' needs after divorce.

Emery, R. (2004): *The truth about children and divorce: Dealing with the emotions so that you and your children can thrive*, Penguin, New York
(<http://www.coloradodivorcemediation.com/family/schedules.asp>)

In this work, Dr. Emery focuses on his conviction that parents' "divorce style" (a couple's style of relating with each other after their separation) critically influences the success of different child custody and parenting plans. Accordingly, for each age grouping of children, he suggests different child custody parenting plans and timesharing schedules for each of three divorce styles: (1) traditional timesharing options for an "angry divorce"; (2) more integrated timesharing options for a "distant divorce"; and (3) closely integrated timesharing options for a "cooperative divorce". The author stresses that alternative timesharing schedules are child custody and parenting plan options to help parents consider and develop an appropriate timesharing and parenting plan. Dr Emery asserts: "You are the leading expert on your children, and you should be the one to craft a plan that you think will work best for them."

Parkinson, P & Smyth, B (2004): "Satisfaction and dissatisfaction with father-child contact arrangements in Australia", *Child and Family Law Quarterly*, vol. 16, no. 3, pp. 289-304.

Patterns of contact between non-resident fathers and their children, and mothers' and fathers' satisfaction with contact arrangements are examined in this article. There is a clear contrast between the level of satisfaction with contact arrangements for a majority of women and the corresponding position for the majority of men. Although 40 percent of resident mothers would like to see more father- child contact taking place, only 5 percent thought that there was too much contact. However, 75 percent of fathers would like to have more contact with their children. Those parents involved with shared parenting arrangements indicated the greatest levels of satisfaction.