



Shared Parenting: the Way Forward

The bond between a mother and her child is typically seen as the strongest bond a person can have. But what about the bond between a father and his child?

In 2013 over 120,000 families with dependent children separated. Traditionally, when parents separated, it was assumed that mothers would be awarded sole custody. These days we don't refer to the term "custody", instead using the term "shared care". This is because fathers are increasingly expected, and want to, take on their share of the responsibilities for their children: feeding, cleaning, childcare and so on.

Since April parents have been able to share their parental leave, with fathers increasingly likely to take more than a fortnight's leave. Additionally, more than one million fathers are now opting for flexible working so they can spend more time with their children.

27 percent of non-resident parents feel the frequency of which they see their child was about right, meaning that 73 percent feel they are not spending enough time with their children. However, 84 percent of people believe that fathers should have equal rights, and equal contact, after divorce.

The Courts are now coming to reflect this in Children Act proceedings with Child Arrangements Orders now being granted. The Courts are also becoming more unforgiving towards mothers who try to prevent fathers from seeing their children without good reason, those who invent abuse allegations or wish to relocate.

Mediation is actively encouraged as a way to resolve disputes regarding children, and it is now compulsory for at least one mediation session to take place before Court proceedings are begun.

Shared parenting is also actively encouraged, with fathers having their children staying with them on a regular basis, during term-times and in school holidays.

Although shared care can be difficult or hard work, ultimately it is in the best interests of the child, and isn't that what is most important?

If you need any advice relating to children matters, contact Dave at David Lee Solicitors on 01926 852 188 or by email david@davidleesolicitors.co.uk