

Advocating for Children in High-risk Families

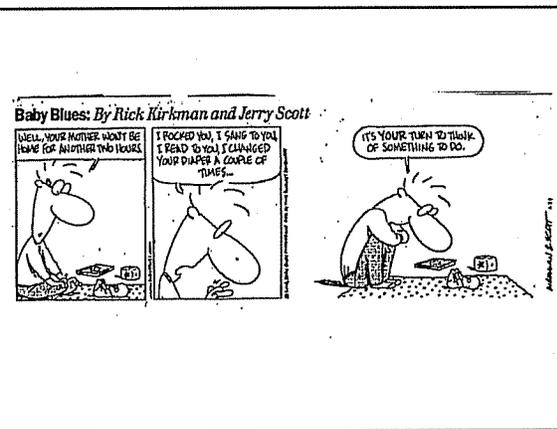
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WHAT WE'LL COVER

- Never married parents
- Lifestyle issues
- Domestic abuse

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CHILDREN'S NEEDS

- Attachment
- Predictability
- Stability
- Consistency of routine
- Appropriate role models



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RESEARCH SAYS

- Conflict is conflict, whether married or not
- Conflict → decreased paternal involvement
- Paternal involvement → increased conflict

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A FEW THOUGHTS

- Pregnancy does not a parent make.
- Fathers make unique contributions to children's lives.
- Children need regular, even if not overnight, contact with both parents.
- Different cultures have different expectations about parenting.

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Extended family is important, but not the same as a biological parent.

Extended family may be able to "monitor" when supervision isn't needed.

Patience really is a virtue when it comes to demonstrating reliability to the other parent.

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GATEKEEPING -- Pruett

"Facilitative and inhibitory functions exercised by one or both parents that determine who will have access to the children."



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Mothers typically are gatekeepers and try to limit father involvement.

There is no formula for amount of time with fathers associated with positive outcomes.



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STUDY SAYS:

- Most overnights with NRP are on weekends
- More weekday overnights assoc. w/ negative outcomes
- Different weekly schedules assoc. w/ negative outcomes
- 3 or more caretakers assoc. w/ negative outcomes

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Greater conflict with other parent assoc. w/ negative outcomes.

Negative view of relationship w/ child assoc. w/ negative outcomes.



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DAN QUAYLE WAS RIGHT

- Nothing good comes from father absence – esp. for boys
 - Academic achievement
 - Peer relations
 - Risk-taking behavior

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NEVER MARRIED PARENTS

1. Parents never lived together or had relationship
2. Parents never lived together but had relationship
3. Parents lived together briefly before and/or after birth
4. Parents with a committed relationship and possibly more than one child
5. Child support-induced parenting

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TRUST IS A PROCESS NOT AN EVENT

- Non-residential parents need to build trust
 - Being consistent in word and deed
- Residential parents need to provide opportunities
 - Pushing their comfort zone is usually necessary
 - Safeguards can be built in
 - No one is a perfect parent

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ROADBLOCKS TO TRUST

- Lack of respect
- Fighting over the details
- Unsafe parenting practices
- Threats
 - Moving
 - Violence
 - Not returning child



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KEEP THEIR EYES ON THE PRIZE

- Children need both parents.
- Most children are resilient.
- In intact families, parents don't do things the same way.
- Consistent does not mean identical.
- "We were having fun" is not a sufficient basis for parenting decisions.
- Mother isn't always right, just often.

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LIFESTYLE ISSUES

- Is it illegal?
- Who determines if it's immoral?
- Is it good judgment?
- Whose needs are being met?
- Are we micromanaging?

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COMMON LIFESTYLE ISSUES

- Sexuality
- Religion
- Use of chemicals
- New significant other/other children
- Unavailability during parenting time

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SEX, LIES & THE INTERNET

- Just because it's gross, doesn't mean it's dangerous
- Is the activity compulsive?
- Does it interfere w/ parenting?
- Are the children involved?
- Could they access the material?

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THIS I PRAY

- Would the religious leader want them to fight?
- Is the belief weird or dangerous?
- Is this connected w/ a MH issue?
- How do the children feel?

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TIMOTHY LEARY'S DEAD

- Are the children exposed to/aware of the chemical use?
- Does it/has it put them in danger?
- Will the parent agree to:
 - Assessment
 - Abstinence during parenting time
 - Monitoring before &/or after parenting time

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OVER MY DEAD BODY

- Whose needs are being met?
- Timing
- Is he/she #1 or #5?
- How are the children being introduced?
- Does this reduce the parent's time/attention/energy for the child?
- Is this a safe person?

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RIGHT OF FIRST REFUSAL

- Is the substitute caregiver an appropriate choice?
- Is this vindictive?
- Does ROFR simplify or disrupt the child's life?
- How frequently does this occur?

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**MALE BATTERING
(INTIMATE TERRORISM)**

- Primarily by males
- Most common pattern is escalating violence
- Intended to intimidate & control
- Injuries are more serious than SCV
- Risk high after separation

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ROOTS OF BATTERING

- Control
- Jealousy
- Reactive to partner
- Mental illness

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**EMOTIONAL ABUSE AND
BATTERING**

- Threats
- Degrading comments
- Isolation
- Monitoring
- Accusations
- Blame

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SITUATIONAL COUPLE VIOLENCE

- Bidirectional
- Injuries not common
- Does not engender same type of fear
- Not primarily intended to control
- Related to poor conflict resolution skills

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THE DATA

- 40-75% of custody-disputing parents allege SCV
- > 50% substantiated for one or both parents
- Includes shoving, pushing, etc.
- Unlikely to escalate
- Likely to stop after separation
 - 60% of women, 67% of men report SCV ends after separation

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 **SEPARATION-ENGENDERED VIOLENCE**

- No previous history of violence
- In context of traumatic separation/divorce events
- Generally one or two episodes
- Either partner can initiate

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 **CO-OCCURRENCE OF ACCESS DISPUTES & DV**

- Batterers are twice as likely to seek physical custody than nonviolent fathers.
- Batterers are more likely to dispute custody of sons.
- Assaultive men are more likely to pursue legal action if they don't receive custody.
- Batterers threaten to kidnap children to control their partners.

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 **IMPACT ON CHILDREN OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE**

- Effects of domestic violence are:
 - ▶▶ Long-term
 - ▶▶ Cumulative
 - ▶▶ Not reduced by gender or age

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LESSONS LEARNED

- Use force to get your way
- Threaten and intimidate to get your way
- There is no logical connection between behavior and consequences
- Lack of empathy, respect

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