

TODAY'S DADS SPECIAL EDITION  
SHARED PLACEMENT & CO-PARENTING

2019 Edition, Issue 1

April, 2019



**EQUAL AND SHARED PARENTING: THE BENEFITS OF CHANGE FAR OUTWEIGH THE OUTDATED STATUS QUO**

By Molly K. Olson – Mankato Times



Even after 50 years since no-fault divorce, artificially created fault-based custody

and parenting time battles, which pit one parent against the other, still persist, causing harm to children.

Educating the media, the public, legislators, judges, and divorce practitioners about the need for a rebuttable presumption of equal shared parenting in law, and why it is the best solution for

children, takes time.

For this and any future article, when I use the phrase rebuttable presumption of equal shared parenting, several assumptions and exceptions exist already in law or will be clarified to protect the safety of children as follows:

Rebuttable means:

The presumption can be argued against at any time, if the circumstances are not appropriate.

No presumption is a mandate. Certainly not in family law where judges have basically unlimited discretion.

The presumption does not apply to all parents. The presumption is for the vast majority of cases involving:

fit, loving, healthy, responsible, parents, who are ready, willing, and able to step-up-to-the-plate to share equally in the consistent responsibility of raising their children,

Exceptions include:

Cases of abuse, harm, neglect, abandonment;

Diagnosed and untreated mental health issues, untreated substance abuse problems, and convictions of domestic violence;

*(Continued on page 4)*

**Inside this issue:**

The Benefits of Equal and Shared Parenting:	1&4
Presidents Message	2
Co Parenting Education mandate	3
HELP WFCF	5
WFCF annual meeting in FDL on 5/18/19	5

WFCF NEEDS A VOLUNTEER FAMILIAR WITH MS PUBLISHER SOFTWARE TO ASSIST WITH OUR NEWSLETTER PUBLISHING. EMAIL: VOLUNTEER@WISCONSINFATHERS.ORG

Surrounding states with a rebuttable presumption of equally shared placement currently being considered: IA, IL, MN, MO

Families United Action Network-FUAN will be hosting their annual "Bubbles of Love" event at the Iowa State Capitol building (1007 E Grand Ave, Des Moines, IA 50319).

There will be music, informative keynote speakers (attorneys, legislators, therapists, and FLR celebrities), and of course BUBBLES.



We are Wisconsin's Oldest "Father's Organization" having been formed in 1988. We have been hosting our Monthly Support and Network Father's Night Out Meetings since 2000 and are a 100% volunteer organization that has always and will always believe that

**Kids NEED BOTH Parents**

# A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT *Tommy Bickel*

It has been a busy few months for WFCF. We were voting members



on the **Legislative Study Committee**, and it finished its work in February, with final votes on many bills. We (WFCF) had high hopes for a discussion in the group on an initial presumption of shared parenting or equal shared parenting as it relates to a child's best interest. Unfortunately this issue was discussed minimally, due to time constraints and the perception that the issue was much contested within the group. There was some testimony by experts relating to the benefits of shared parenting, as it related to mediation and a compilation of actual parenting outcomes in WI over a period of time up to 2011 that was done at UW Madison.

Several bills were voted on and approved by the committee that directly affects **children with separated parents**. There is a future contingency bill (LRB-0660/AB 95), which will have a significant posi-

tive effect on the fathers who are unmarried with newborn children and it passed 12-0. LRB 1984 relating to the involvement and cooperation of both parents in a physical placement schedule also passed 12-1. LRB-1985/1- AB 98, updating the factors relating to the physical placement of a child, passed 10-3. This bill represented some clarification and combining of the 16 factors used in determining appropriate placement orders. There

*bills were voted on and approved by the committee that directly affects children with separated parents.*

were a couple of bills that helped military members that passed, and one that paused arrears accumulation when one parent is incarcerated also was passed.

Unfortunately one bill (LRB-0976/1) passed (9-4), relating to eliminating the administrative rule limitation on the recovery of birth costs, specifically in situations where both parents live in the same home with child, and are low income. It makes sense to us (WFCF) that if both parents are living together and their combined income was low enough to qualify the family for assistance, that both the mother and the father should not be held financially responsible for the recovery of the birthing costs. The passage of this bill will mean even though these parents

are living together and sharing expenses half the prorated (avg. recoveries are in the \$700 range which is significantly less than half the actual birthing cost) birthing costs will again start coming out of their limited household income. We voted against that bill as did Ben Kain of IFW. We believe both parents should be treated equally in

**MH IMAGING**  
KNOW YOUR INNER HEALTH

**Any single MRI \$550  
(all inclusive)  
for non-insured patients.**

---

**MH Imaging**  
Save up to 75% compared to hospitals

---

Same day appointments with same day results

Imaging reports by local, onsite, Triple Board Certified Radiologist, Malcolm Hatfield, MD, FACR

The world's most advanced open MRI technology.

Also offering CT, Ultrasound and X-Ray Services

**MILWAUKEE** | 414.281.1490 | 7818 | W. Layton Avenue  
**KENOSHA** | 262.842.1400 | 1020 35th Street, Suite 120  
**RACINE** | 262.321.7970 | 6800 Washington Avenue, Suite B  
**www.mhimaging.com**

low income cases and that it is in the best interest of their shared children as well, to keep all the limited household income in the household for use toward family day to day expenses.

Lastly because we believe **co-parenting is absolutely in the best interest of children and their separated parents**, we are working with Representative Mursau's office to

*(Continued on page 3)*

**Join Today ~ \$30 Lifetime Membership**

# CO PARENTING TRAINING

*(Continued from page 2)*

have a co-parenting education mandate bill be released very soon. Over half of the counties in WI already mandate that co-parenting education be completed by separating or separated parents prior to moving forward in placement proceedings. What are learned in these very inexpensive and short courses, are skills and techniques for parents to insure that their shared children's best interest is always primary in **shared** decisions. We believe having all Wisconsin parents taking these short classes will greatly decrease future co-parenting problems they encounter, while improving the parents and the children's lives by eliminating points of undue stress.

**Up to Parents.** This is also a **Free** online program help for separated, divorced, and never-married parents. Why? Because peace for children is success for parents. Some revolutionary ideas on how separated and divorced parents can save their money, their chance to make their own decisions, and their peace of mind — by acting first to **meet their children's need for peace in their family.**

*"This website really puts things in perspective. It makes you realize*

## Why Co parenting education?

The Wisconsin Statutes allow the Family Court to establish an education program to help parents **understand the effects of divorce on their children**

Quote from county in WI that has used co-parenting training for *many years: The in-person program was received positively by the vast majority of the participants, so the same program was used online (CIBO). It is our belief that people who **are well informed** about how their interaction with the other parent affects their children will be able to make **better decisions** that will not harm their children. **Children in Between Online (CIBO)** is commonly accepted by court systems across the United States to fulfill requirements regarding di-*

*that no matter how trying times are, you'll do best by thinking about your kids first".*

American Bar Association

*"Attorney as Problem-Solver Award"*  
Association of Family and Conciliation

Courts "Irwin Cantor *Innovative Program Award*"

voiced education for parents, often replacing inconvenient and expensive in-person classes. Cost: \$45.95 per person.

Participants watch videos with common co-parenting problems and then see different responses that produce positive and negative results. After each video scenario, CIBO presents the user with guided questions to explore how each problem can be addressed, and to increase your understanding of the situation. At the end of each chapter, you'll have the opportunity to reinforce what you've learned by taking a quiz. Quizzes help ensure that you'll be ready to handle situations in the future. You can spend time practicing and refining your skills in our Skills Practice section - meant to increase your confidence in the skills taught in CIBO.

*"Children's Champion Award"* of the Academy of Professional Family Mediators (APFM)

**Representative Jeffrey Mursau,** Assembly District 36 (R - Crivitz).

Representative Mursau and his staff worked very closely with WFCF during the last legislative session while authoring 2017 Assembly Bill 940 regarding mandatory co-parenting classes. He has already committed to re-introducing this legislation this 2019 session only this time much earlier in the session with the hope that this legislation will be more successful.

**co-parenting is absolutely in the best interest of children and their separated parents**



## LAW CHANGES SUPPORTED BY CHILD DEVELOPMENT RESEARCH

(Continued from page 1)

Unresolvable logistical challenges (school/work/activity schedules), geographic limitations, and special medical or educational needs of a child that can't be accommodated in both households.

Too many legislators and judges make decisions based on debunked myths, outdated beliefs, and too often, personal bias. They aren't experts in the social science research on equal shared parenting. I have been researching the issue of equal shared parenting and the importance of both parents for 20 years. I have collected an enormous amount of information decision makers need to hear if they truly want to act in the best interest of children.

A rebuttable presumption of equal shared parenting (ESP) will have tremendous benefits for mothers, fathers, and children, creating better outcomes for the whole family. Based on the research, and a short summary of benefits, equal shared parenting will:

Create a level playing field. Both parents will be treated equally, and equally supported, as an equally valuable parent, regardless of gender. In most cases there are two "good enough" parents. No parent is perfect, and divorce and separation need not create a contest between the parents over who is the better-or-worse parent. Children want and need both parents.

Reduce Conflict. Equality always positions people for less conflict. Everyone agrees, children benefit from reduced conflict. The battles will be minimized because parents no longer have to worry about whether they will lose their kids arbitrarily, due to the subjective bias of a lawyer or judge or custody evaluator.

Protect Children from Being Played as a Prize. ESP will ensure children are no longer put in the middle, and used as a pawn, during a vulnerable and difficult time in their life. The incentive to create a legal "game" over who "wins" the kids will no longer be at the core. Currently, too many children are asked to pick what parent they want to be with – this is nothing short of child abuse.

Reduced Conflict Will Reduce Money Wasted on Litigation. Less conflict means litigation will be reduced, which means parents will spend less money paying for their usually unaffordable lawyer bills. Parents will have more money to spend on their children or save for their college fund. (Is it any surprise that paid lobbyists for the legal profession remain steadfast in their opposition to a legal presumption of equal shared parenting?)

Ensures Both Parents Have Equal Opportunity to Pursue their Careers/Job. The days of "Disney Dad" who has all the fun with the kids, while mom has the "hard job" of weekday parenting and juggling a job, will be over. "Balancing it all" should be easier for moms and better for kids.

Revoke the One-Size-Fits-All Every Other Weekend Default. While the every other weekend parenting time schedule still persists after 50 years, it was never based in any research. A child who sees their father 4 days a month, does not have adequate time to bond with that parent.

Increase Cooperation and Win-Win Agreements Between Parents. If neither parent is plagued with the uncertainty of who will be the winner and who will be the loser parent, it allows a safe environment for the parents to let their guard down and focus on the child(ren).

Expedite Stability for Children, Mother, and Father. During and after divorce and separation, everything changes for everyone in the family. With the current outdated winner-take-all custody and parenting time model, court cases can go years and years before anything is settled. Equality will expedite stability and a new routine that is in the best interest of children.

Ensure the best interest of children. If the social science is no longer ignored, and equal parenting is achieved, better outcomes for kids will prevail. Children get maximum love and support from both parents. Divorce and separation are a difficult time for everyone. Children need more love and support not less. Maximizing time with both parents will improve a child's wellbeing for a

lifetime.

Minimize Outdated Gender Stereotypes of Parenting Roles. Our society has moved past old expectations based on gender stereotypes. Both genders have the capacity to be nurturing with children. Both mothers and fathers have careers that set examples for their kids. Parenting time laws and judicial biases against fathers have lagged society for far too long. Society has changed to the point where young men today in their 20's and 30's fully expect and want to be highly involved parents. Employers are supporting father involvement like never before.

Reduce the burden on the judicial system. The courts often complain about budgetary constraints and a heavy workload. Equal shared parenting will further reduce court involvement in parenting time disputes, because parents will work things out more readily on their own.

Legislators, judges, divorce practitioners, and lobbyists for divorce lawyer groups who resist equal shared parenting can no longer claim to be serving children.

**Molly K Olson** is the Founder of Center for Parental Responsibility (JPCeffort@cpr-mn.org) and Co-Founder **Leading Women for Shared Parenting** (www.lw4sp.org)



Two ways to get **HELP**:

FNO meeting: *in person*:

<http://www.wisconsinfathers.org/fathersnight.htm>

WFCF Helpline: *email*

<http://www.wisconsinfathers.org/alldads.htm>

**HELP WFCF** as we continue to work on **improving separated parent's lives, and children with separated parent's lives.** We have four ways; you can make a positive difference and help WFCF.

**JOIN WFCF** with a low \$30 investment for a lifetime membership!

<http://www.wisconsinfathers.org/join.htm>

**Make a tax deductible donation** of ANY amount to WFCF!

<http://www.wisconsinfathers.org/join.htm> Scroll down to **Help us Financially**

**Use Facebook nonprofit donations on your birthday**, to invite others to support

a group YOU support, WFCF! <http://www.wisconsinfathers.org/facebook.pdf>

**Attend a local Fathers Night Out meeting** to help others through an emotional time in their lives and connect with other WFCF members to actively support the best interest of children and parents. <http://www.wisconsinfathers.org/fathersnight.htm>

**TOGETHER we can continue to make a difference!**

**WFCF ANNUAL MEETING 5/18/19,**

**FOND DU LAC, WI**

**LEDGEVIEW LANES, 170 PRAIRIE RD, FDL, 54935**

*THIS IS THE SAME LOCATION WE HAD THE CHILI-BOWL/CHILI/RAFFLE  
OUTING IN 2017*

**WHO WE ARE:** WE ARE A GROUP OF MEN AND WOMEN WORKING TO ASSURE EVERY CHILD HAVE THE FULLEST OPPORTUNITY TO EXPERIENCE THE LOVE AND NURTURANCE OF BOTH THEIR FATHER AND MOTHER. WE SUPPORT THE ROLE OF RESPONSIBLE PARENTS IN THE RAISING OF CHILDREN. WE ALSO EDUCATE THE PUBLIC, COURTS AND LEGISLATORS ABOUT THE IMPORTANT ROLE **BOTH** PARENTS PLAY IN ALL OUR CHILDREN'S LIVES.

**OUR MISSION:** ENRICH PROSPERITY OF CHILDREN FROM DIVIDED/BLENDED FAMILIES THROUGH ADVOCACY, INITIATIVES, AND SUPPORT FOR SHARED AND COOPERATIVE PARENTING.

**WE BELIEVE:** "KIDS NEED.....**BOTH PARENTS.**"

**MAY 18TH 2019 / JOIN US.**

**3PM MEETING / 4 PM BOWL. SNACKS AND DRINKS PROVIDED**



**WISCONSIN FATHERS FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES**

PO Box 1742  
Madison WI 53701

<http://www.wisconsinfathers.org>



## MONTHLY FATHER'S NIGHT OUT MEETINGS

WFCF IS NOW OFFERING **120 MEETINGS** IN PERSON MEETINGS  
ACROSS THE STATE PER YEAR

**Milwaukee:**

Last Monday of the month  
7:30 - 8:30 PM at:

**Stagecoach Inn**

W61N520 Washington Ave, Cedarburg, WI

**Madison:**

*Third Monday of the month*  
6:15 PM at:

**World Buffet at South Town Mall**

2451 W Broadway, Monona, WI

**Fox Valley:**

*Third Tuesday of the month*  
6:30 PM at:

**El Jarpeo Mexican Restaurant**

1727 Freedom Rd, Little Chute, WI

**Central WI:**

*Second Monday of the month*  
7:30 PM at:

**Korner Kitchen**

4890 Hwy H, Edgar, WI

**NW WI (Eau Claire):**

*Third Thursday of each month*  
6:30 PM at:

**Taquera La Poblantia**

2436 London Rd, Eau Claire, WI



**Green Bay/NE WI:**

*First Wednesday of the month*  
6:30 PM at:

**Townline Pub**

2544 Lineville Rd, Green Bay, WI

**La Crosse:**

*Second Thursday of the month*  
6:30 PM at:

**Sheninigans**

2100 Dawson Ave, La Crosse, WI

**Janesville:**

*Second Thursday of the month*  
6 PM at:

**Denny's**

2020 Milton Ave, Janesville, WI

**Racine:**

*Third Friday of the month*  
7:30 PM at:

**Asian Buffet**

3701 Durand Ave, Racine, WI

**Fond du Lac:**

*Second Monday of the month*  
6:30 PM at:

**Schmitty's Oar House Bar and Grill**

N7044 Winnebago Dr, Fond du Lac, WI