



Today's Dads

NEWSLETTER OF WISCONSIN FATHERS FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES
(<http://www.wisconsinfathers.org>)

December 2016

WFCF Annual Meeting Monday January 23rd, 2017 RSVP required this year

Madison: — As mandated by our WFCF bylaws we will be having the **WFCF Annual Meeting** at the **Coliseum Bar, Madison at 7 PM– 8:30 PM on January 23rd, social hour starts at 6 PM.** Perfect opportunity to meet in person with others who share the *passion* to help others and to establish equality for both parents in the WI court system.

We welcome all members, non members, wives, significant others, and friends. We will provide light food and drinks at no charge.

PLEASE RSVP by January 16th the number and names of **attendees to: wfcftreasurer@outlook.com** . This is a change from previous meetings as we want to make sure we have sufficient food and drinks for all.

At the annual meeting I will update everyone on what we have accomplished in 2016 as a group. We will thank the 2016 board for their efforts and **welcome in a new board for 2017.** There will also be an **open discussion as to any new idea's and actions** we should consider as a group. Please be prepared to outline how you would help these idea's to happen. **We are working on getting speakers as well.**

If you are considering stepping up and joining the WFCF board in 2017 the following steps are what is required:

1 - You **MUST** be a WFCF member. You can become a member join via our website at :
<http://www.wisconsinfathers.org/join.htm>

2 - You **MUST** send an email **by January 7th, 2017** to **wfcftreasurer@outlook.com**, declaring you intention to join the WFCF board and briefly describing how you **can/will** help our group. ***Hope to see you there !***

"DADS OF WISCONSIN" MEET AND GREET SET FOR THURSDAY JANUARY 19TH - COME LOBBY WITH US!

We have confirmed the date for the **Dads of Wisconsin** Meet and Greet and lobby event at the state capitol in Madison. It will be Thursday **January 19th, 2017.** We will meet in the North Hearing Room, 2nd floor **at 8:30** for a short orientation session and then split up to start seeking support for **equal parenting under the Family Protection Act.** Dads of Wisconsin will send invitations to all legislative offices asking the legislators or members of their staffs to come down and talk with us. Rep. Krug may also notify his colleagues about the event for us. DoW will provide coffee and WFCF will provide the donuts! Last time a couple of the ladies **brought home made cookies!** We still have openings for citizen lobbyists who want to help make a difference. The more women we have lobbying **for equal parenting** the better. Contact Steve Blake at

steveblake53@yahoo.com to volunteer. **Dads of Wisconsin** will be setting up meetings with state senators for this event. We will have several teams so we can cover as many offices as we can. We will provide training and an experienced lobbyist will accompany each team as they go to the meetings

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Getting kids school information

Did you realize that Children in Wisconsin only are in school for approximately for 9% of the first 18 years of their lives? Albeit such a small percentage of their lives it is some of the most important time of their lives! It is critically important that every child be entitled to **the involvement of both parents** in their education. Unfortunately, when parents are divorced, legally separated, or where never married and don't live together it is not uncommon for one parent to try and **alienate** the other parent from the child. There is one way that an uninformed parent can unintentionally allow themselves to be victims of alienation to one of the most important parts of a child's life... their education. Luckily **Wisconsin State Statute 767.41(7)** protects parents from being alienated from their child(ren)'s education but it requires action. Both parents are individually responsible for insuring their child(ren)'s school has their contact information and knows that you want to be informed and involved. Wisconsin Father's for Children and Families wants to help insure as many Wisconsin Children as possible who have **two parents who want to be involved** in their education have that right!

There is information on the **WFCF website** specifically regarding contacting your child(ren)'s school. From the website home page there is a button in the left margin "Contacting Kids School for Info" which will take you to <http://www.wisconsinfathers.org/school.htm> . On this page there is a sample form letter that you can copy and paste to Microsoft Word or any other word processing application you use. This letter should be given to the Principal at your child(ren)'s school, I also recommend providing a copy to each of the child(ren)'s teachers, and a copy can even be provided to the other parent to prevent any accusations of going behind their back. Pursuant to Wisconsin State Statute 767.41(7) unless otherwise ordered by the Court or as long as you have not been denied periods of physical placement with your child(ren) you are **legally and statutorily entitled** to this .

information regardless of whether or not you have any level of Legal Custody of your child(ren). **Stand up, exercise your rights and be involved in your child(ren)'s school**, the statistics from an October 1997 study titled "Father's Involvement in their Children's Schools conducted and published by the US Department of Education are staggering. This report can be accessed at <http://nces.ed.gov/pubs98/98091.pdf> There is also a Federal Law called "The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) (20 U.S.C. § 1232g; 34 CFR Part 99)" that also provides parents certain rights with respect to their children's education records. This law is more complex and the information above should be sufficient to obtain the information you need however in the event you encounter resistance from your child(ren)'s school this provides additional support of your rights.

Wisconsin Fathers for Families and Children recently concluded their first survey of our state's 446 public school districts surveying over 2,259 individuals representing these 446 districts which combine for 2,215 individual schools. We received a total of 290 responses and we received 1 or more responses from 44% of the Districts in our State. This survey was the starting point in what we believe will be a multiple survey series involving our children's schools to **increase awareness and education on the importance of involving both parents in a child's education**. You can review the results of our survey at:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/results/SM-YKQNDP3N/>, any questions, comments or concerns regarding the survey can be emailed to wfcf.initiatives@outlook.com. We always welcome input and assistance with our efforts to work with our schools. Our initial goals are to work with schools **to implement standardized policies about working with both parents, improve registration forms to insure information is collected on both parents** .

HELP WFCF

With the legislative push in 2017 for equal parenting rights we need more than ever to increase our membership. More members add more creditability to our legislators, which tells them there are a LOT of voters who want this change to come about NOW.

With that in mind WFCF is lowering the life membership rate from \$30 to **\$15 !**

Everybody knows 5 other people who feel fathers are an important part of children's lives. We want to maximize our membership so it adds maximum credence to our rally call for equal rights for BOTH parents.

Please let at least five other people know that by joining our group (*at a reduced rate*) they will help insure that **ALL fathers** have an opportunity to be a parent to their children.

If we do this, it will not be 1000 people asking for equality for BOTH parents, it will be **5000 people asking for equality!**

FATHERS ARE IMPORTANT

Please ask at least 5 people to consider a tax deductible donation

**[http://
www.wisconsinfathers.org/
join.htm](http://www.wisconsinfathers.org/join.htm)**

Click on **buy now** to join
WFCF

WFCF has 667 Facebook likes

1000 would really help our cause!

Please ask 5 friend's to like:

[https://www.facebook.com/
WisconsinFathersForChildren-
AndFamilies/](https://www.facebook.com/WisconsinFathersForChildren-AndFamilies/)

***"The Best Parent is...
Both Parents"***

Fathers Night Out (Fox Valley)



Wisconsin Fathers for Children and Families

Do It Yourself
Pro Se Help

Dads Helpline

Legal Resources

Fathers Night Out



WISCONSINFATHERS.ORG | Facebook.com/WisconsinFathersForChildrenAndFamilies

Many of us struggle as Co-PARENTS

I know I did. **Frustrating** and **angering** to say the least.

I was unaware of the Divorce Rules, and I assume the other parent was as well. If I had known, there are things I would not have said or done. And I would have shared this info with the other parent and hoped that they would too, realize that following these rules is definitely in our shared children's best interest.

Maybe it would have helped, it's worth a try. Share this:

Divorce Rules

Post these rules on your refrigerator as a reminder of your commitment to care. Ask your child to let you know if you forget one of the rules. Never reprimand your child when he or she gives you this feedback.

Dear Mom and Dad, I'm just a kid, so please...

1. Do not talk badly about my other parent. *(This makes me feel torn apart! It also makes me feel bad about myself!)*
2. Do not talk about my other parent's friends or relatives. *(Let me care for someone even if you don't.)*
3. Do not talk about the divorce or other grown-up stuff. *(This makes me feel sick. Please leave me out of it!)*
4. Do not talk about money or child support. *(This makes me feel guilty or like I'm a possession instead of your kid.)*
5. Do not make me feel bad when I enjoy my time with my other parent. *(This makes me afraid to tell you things.)*
6. Do not lock my visits or prevent me from speaking to my other parent on the phone. *(This makes me very upset.)*
7. Do not interrupt my time with my other parent by calling too much or by planning my activities during our time together.
8. Do not argue in front of me or on the phone when I can hear you! *(This just turns my stomach inside out!)*
9. Do not ask me to spy for you when I am at my other parent's home. *(This makes me feel disloyal and dishonest.)*

10. Do not ask me to keep secrets from my other parent. *(Secrets make me feel anxious.)*

11. Do not ask questions about my other parent's life or about our time together. *(This makes me uncomfortable. So just let me tell you.)*

12. Do not give me verbal messages to deliver to my other parent. *(I end up feeling anxious about their reaction. So please just call them, leave them a message at work or put a note in the mail.)*

13. Do not send written messages with me or place them in my bag. *(This also makes me uncomfortable.)*

14. Do not blame my other parent for the divorce or for things that go wrong in your life. *(This really feels terrible! I end up wanting to defend them from your attack. Sometimes it makes me feel sorry for you and that makes me want to protect you. I just want to be a kid, so please, please....stop putting me in the middle.)*

15. Do not treat me like an adult, it causes way too much stress for me. *(Please find a friend or therapist to talk with.)*

16. Do not ignore my other parent or sit on opposite sides of the room during my school or sports activities. *(This makes me very sad and embarrassed. Please act like parents and be friendly, even if it is just for me.)*

17. Do let me take items to my other home as long as I can carry them back and forth. *(Otherwise it feels like you are treating me like a possession.)*

18. Do not use guilt to pressure me to love you more and do not ask where I want to live.

19. Do realize that I have two homes, not just one. *(It doesn't matter how much time I spend there.)*

Do let me love both of you and see each of you as much as possible! Be flexible even when it is not part of our regular schedule.

Thanks, your loving child

Wisconsin Child Custody/Placement

Information Provided by: Max D. Harris, Esq.

In Wisconsin the term "legal custody" refers **not to where the children are to live but to the allocation of decision-making authority** among the parties with respect to major decisions. The term **"physical placement"** is used to refer to where the children are to live, and the term "periods of physical placement" refers to the time the children are placed with a particular parent or custodian

Legal custody may be sole or joint, or mixed sole and joint (joint in some areas but sole in others). **Joint legal custody means both parents have a right to participate in major decisions affecting the children**; sole legal custody means only the parent with legal custody has the right to decide major decisions affecting the children. Occasionally the court will grant joint legal custody on most issues but identify certain areas where one parent has sole legal custody.

The court may grant joint legal custody if it finds that it is in the best interests of the children and either both parents request it or one parent requests it and the court finds all three of the following: 1) both parents are capable of performing parental duties, 2) no conditions exist which would substantially interfere with the exercise of joint legal custody, and 3) the parties will be able to cooperate in the future decision-making required by joint legal custody.

Under certain circumstances the court may transfer legal custody to a relative of the children or to an agency if the court finds that neither parent is able to adequately care for the children. This third-party custody decision under a divorce decree is rare but seems to be becoming more common as more and more children are left with relatives by distressed spouses prior to divorce.

The court will want the children to spend time with both parents, and by statutory law must allocate periods of physical placement between the parties unless the court finds that physical placement with a parent would endanger the children's physical, mental or emotional health. Absolute denial of periods of physical placement is very rare, but if ordered, may provide a basis for eventual termination of parental rights.

In most cases each parent is awarded periods of physical placement of the children. The actual placement arrangement may take one of three basic forms:

- **The Traditional Form** - One parent has primary placement of the children and the other parent has periods of placement which usually take the form of every other weekend during the school year plus extra time in the summer. There is also usually an alternating of holidays and a sharing of Christmas.
- **Shared Placement** - In recent years the idea of the parents sharing placement of the children more equally has grown in popularity. This may take the form of equal shared placement, such as alternating week or two-week periods, or some other form of shared placement which is not equal but in which the parent with less time has substantially more time than the noncustodial parent under the traditional form. Parents who work different shifts may also find shared placement an effective way of sharing responsibility and care of the children. There is a special shared placement child support rule which lowers the child support obligation in recognition of the additional care and support provided by a shared placement format.
- **Split Custody** - Occasionally, and for a wide variety of reasons, children are split up between the parents, with each parent having periods of placement with the child or children primarily placed with the other parent. With split custody, the visitation schedules are usually set up to have the children together every weekend and for substantial times in the summer. There is a special split custody child support rule which offsets and nets the child obligations of the parent.

Factors for Determining Placement

If the parties cannot reach an agreement about the placement arrangement for the children the court may have to decide the issue after a trial. The interests of the children are represented at the trial by an attorney, known as a guardian ad litem, appointed by the court to represent the children's interests. A custody study is usually prepared for the benefit of the court and plays a significant role in the guardian ad litem's position and the court's decision.

The court shall consider the following ten factors in making its determination:

- The wishes of the parents.
- The wishes of the children.
- The relationships of the children with the parents and other significant persons. (*continued on page 6*)

- The children's adjustments to home, community, school and religion.
- The mental and physical health of the parties and the children.
- The availability of child care services.
- Whether one party is likely to unreasonably interfere with the children's relationships with the other party.
- Whether there is evidence that a party has engaged in child abuse.
- Whether there is evidence that a party has engaged in inter-spousal battery.
- Whether either party has a significant problem with alcohol or drug abuse

When Parents Disagree: 6 Ways to Parent as a Team

Most couples have experienced this situation at one time or another—you think you should discipline your child a certain way, and your spouse wants to handle it differently. You each become entrenched in your position, and that's when the fighting starts.

At some point, most couples will argue over how to discipline their children. After all, you and your spouse are different people who will naturally approach parenting differently at times—or maybe more often than you'd like. Understand that some disagreement is to be expected. Marriages, after all, are unions between people from different family backgrounds and beliefs, which can easily lead to parental tensions.

Rather than teaching your child how to behave and problem solve, the focus instead becomes parent against parent.

Let's stop here for a minute and make an important distinction between having different beliefs and communication styles versus not being able to agree on what *decisions* to make regarding

your children. Since we are not the same people, we will each have our own style of relating to our kids. You might be very talkative and like to chat while your spouse might be quieter and more reserved around your child. Both styles are okay. It's the differences around parental *decisions* regarding a child that can be problematic. For example, let's say you believe your child should be punished harshly for lying while your spouse feels that lying isn't a big deal. As a result, you react differently and aren't on the same page when it comes to consequences. Here's the truth: Children can sense when their parents aren't in sync in their decisions around discipline. Your child will feel the lack of unity between you, which can create a feeling of instability for him. This will also give kids an opening; they will sometimes use it to provoke a fight. This gets your child off the hook and turns parent against parent. (More on this later.)

Related: Fighting over parenting decisions? How to find common ground.

Disagreements between parents can cause minor flare-ups or a serious all-out war in your household. Following these 10 simple guidelines can help you to avoid battles when it comes to raising your children.

1. **Provide back-up.** Make it a rule that if one parent disciplines the kids, the other parent must back them up, even if they do not agree. If you don't do this, it will show your child that his parents are not a unified team and undermine your authority. Your child will see that he can get around any parenting decision you make. (Note: this does not apply to parents who neglect or abuse their children. If you feel that something your spouse is doing is detrimental to your children in some physical or emotional way, then you need to put your foot down and say, "I can't go along with this." Then take the necessary steps to make sure your child is safe.) **Continued..... On page 7**

2. Arrive in the same place. Find a way to arrive in the same place on how to proceed with your child. Be aware that your fights over how to raise your children are disturbing to your kids. Children don't like to see their parents not getting along, and these battles can have long-term effects. Understand also that every time you argue with your mate over parenting, the focus shifts away from your child. Rather than teaching your child how to behave and problem solve, the focus instead becomes parent against parent. Back one another up in the moment, even if you don't fully agree. Later, when things are calm, (and you're out of earshot of your child), you can discuss better ways of handling the situation with your spouse, and then present a unified front.

3. Who feels most strongly about the issue at hand? If you and your spouse really are on different pages on something and neither person can get to the other side of the issue, then the parent who feels more passionately about it might make the call. Let's say, for example, that you're okay with your 12-year-old going to a sleep over at a good friend's house, but your spouse is still fearful of allowing your child to have that kind of independence. You might say, "I feel so strongly about this. I'd really like you to support me on this, even if you don't see it the same way." Or, "Can I ask you to go along with me on this one, even if you don't agree?" Or, "I can't say for certain that this is the best decision, but my gut is telling me to give it a try. Can you support me on this?"

4. Talk about parenting decisions when you are calm. When calmly listening to one another's perspective without being critical, you'll have a better shot at influencing your spouse's decision. Remember, there is no such thing as "One Truth" thinking. There are many ways to think about things, not just your way. When you can be respectful of that truth and make room for another person's thoughts that are different than your own, you'll have a chance of keeping your mate open to your ways of thinking,

5. Empathize with your child, but don't throw your spouse under the bus. If your spouse feels more strongly about something and you've decided to go along with their decision, you can say to your child, "I know it's hard for you when Mom won't let you go on a sleepover. I see it bothers you because you feel you are ready for this independence." You're empathizing with your child's feelings, but not breaking the unified stance. When you show empathy, your child also feels he's understood and not so alone. Your child still must go along with the decision you've made with your mate. Again, later, Dad can discuss with Mom his differing views and perhaps they can come to a different decision together on how to handle things the next time the situation comes up.

6. When parents fight, kids are off the hook. Sometimes kids will use the fact that you're not on the same page to manipulate you. They might even set you up to fight with each other to get off the hook. Let's say your husband is very strict with your son about schoolwork, but you feel that he's putting too much pressure on your child. Here's a scenario: When it's time to do his homework, your son says he "stinks at math" and complains about his teacher. Your husband yells at him and says that he needs to bring up his math grade. Instead of answering, your child looks at you for help. As if on cue, you jump in and say, "Get off his back—he's doing fine." Your husband replies, "If he was doing fine he would have gotten a better score." Now the fight is ramping up. You respond with, "You're too strict—that's why he's like this, because you're too hard on him." Meanwhile, your child keeps watching TV and doesn't do the homework he was supposed to do. In this situation, the focus goes to the wrong place. When kids provoke these arguments, they're not getting the discipline they need and they're not being held accountable. In addition, the tension caused by the fighting is going to increase the tension in your home

Wisconsin Fathers for Children and Families



P.O. Box 1742
 Madison, WI 53701-1742
<http://www.wisconsinfathers.org>
 608-ALL-DADS
 Return Service Requested

WFCF Membership Form

Name:

Address:

City, State, Zip Code :

Phone:

E-mail:

Please enclose \$15 for a lifetime membership

Fathers Night Out

Support and Social Meeting

Milwaukee: Milwaukee area meetings are held the *second Tuesday of the month* 7:15 PM at:
BAR LOUIE, 5750 Bayshore Dr., Glendale, WI 53217

Madison: Madison area meetings are held the *third Monday of the month* 6:15 PM at:
World Buffet, South Town Mall, 2451 West Broadway, Monona, WI 53713

Fox Valley: Fox Valley area meetings are held the *third Tuesday of the month* 6:30 PM at:
5th Quarter, 2101 American Dr, Little Chute, WI 54140

Central WI: Central WI area meetings are held the *second Monday of the month* 7:30 PM at:
Korner Kitchen, 4890 Hwy H, Edgar, WI 54426

NW WI: Northwest WI area meetings are held the *third Thursday of each month* 7 PM at:
Milwaukee Burger Company, 2620 E Clairemont Ave, Eau Claire, WI

Janesville: Beloit/Janesville area meetings are held the *first Tuesday of the month* 7 PM at:
World Buffet, 2701 Milton Ave, Janesville, WI **NO meeting : 1/17-3/17**

La Crosse: La Crosse area are held on *second Thursday of the month* at 630 PM at:
Sheninigans, 2100 Dawson Ave, La Crosse, WI

Visit: www.wisconsinfathers.org