

Children in Time-shared Living Arrangements

Legislation (DK) Research findings and some clinical aspects.

Danish National Centre for Social Research; Children living in two homes. 2011/12

State Administration, Copenhagen: Two Homes-one Family. 2009/10

Legislation.

Act on Parental Responsibility Custody & access

“ The child’s views must be taken into consideration during case about custody, the child’s place of residence or contact with the non resident parent. (x)

(X) In Norway & Sweden as well

Access

Former legislation;

Access; *“Can be made from one hour to seven days on a 14-days basis.”*

Today;

Access are based on *“a concrete individual assessment of what is best for the Child”*.

Oct.2012

Custody

Former legislation :

Joint custody: “unless there are major cooperation problems, history of violence or other significant problems between the parent joint custody is given”.

Today:

Joint custody requires that; ” There must be a potential for a parental cooperation if joint custody” Oct. 2012

Figures about 7/7

The State Administration made decisions in access cases - 16.000 (x)

In 86 cases decided State Administration an 7/7. arrangement.

X (2010)

New legislation helps to keep the focus on the child's perspective.

- Decisions on access are based upon;
- The child's age and maturity
- The child's attitude towards visitation depending on the age and maturity
- The child's daily life, including leisure activities
- The visiting parent and the child's previous contact
- The parents' ability to cooperate
- Parents' work and personal circumstances
- The distance between the parents' homes
- The child's contact with siblings, including stepsiblings
- Other practical issues
- (Act on Parental Responsibility Custody & Access. 2012)

Where we have our knowledge from ?

Primary interviews of 28 children

(Age 8 to 14 years)

Secondary: Interview with 24 parents & with
four youngster

(Age 21 og 22 år)

56 persons

(In 8 cases The State Administration had
decided 7 days of 14 days with the non resident
parent,SFI. 2011

Primary interviews of 10 children
Age (8 to 16 years)

Secondary: Interview with 11 parents

Interviewed: 21

“Two homes one family”

The Interviews in both studies, took place at the child's home/own room, with door closed to other family members (siblings each)

The Children were promised confidentiality

Definition of Time-Share Living days with non- residential parent

Time-share Living arrangement as 6 days or 7
days out of 14 days.(The Danish National Centre for Social
Research)

Time-share-Living arrangement as 7 days of 14
days (“Two homes one Family”, State Administration, Copenhagen)

The purpose of both studies

Illustrate how children's life are effected inside and outside the family, when a child live in a Time-share Living arrangement.

Parents motives to choose 7/7

To continue close contact with the child or
Missing more contact with the child.

Fairness/justice

Avoid conflict

Economic reasons (avoid allowance)

Quotes;

Quotes for 7/7 -1

“I think it's that sense of justice, on which you have children equally that matters...” (*father of two*)

“I think it was important for all three of us, that we should not have conflict about him, whatever that may entail” (*father of one*).

“I told them (*the children*) that they should expect that if I get 7/7.scheme.... I am happy, and their mother is upset.” (*father of two*).

Quotes for 7/7 -2

When you are divorced you start out the relationship and building it up again. In this context one must be careful not to lose focus on children and their needs for both a mother and a father and a sense of family. "

(mother of two)

" I know that my ex-husband just want the children all the time, as I'd like.... It is very selfish, our choice, (7/7) well, it is our needs that have been covered I think"

(mother of two)

The Child's perspective on 7/7

We wanted information about;

The child's right to be heard and the right to protection.

The child's view of two homes

How the Child cope with a commute life on 7/7 days basis.

What applies to children in Time-Shared Living arrangement ? and what applies to divorce children – in general?

The child's perspective (1)

“ I have the same friends, whether I am with mom or dad”. (*boy 9 years*)

“ If I want to be an extra day with my father...or my mother. I can just do it.”(*boy 10 years*)

“Mom and Dad take care of everything practical. I have a mother-bag and a father-bag.” (*girl 8 years*)

The Child's Perspective (2)

“ There are many disadvantages, something is sometimes “gone”. But mother helps me to remember with clothes...ect..... and father helps with other things”(*boy 11 years*)

“It can be a mess, with a huge bag of clothes”
(*girl 16 years*)

The Childs Perspective (3)

“ Well, I get a little sad now and then because it is..... a bit frustrating to switch home all the time.....” *(girl 13 years)*

“If I for some reason stay with my father an extra day; then my mother also want me to stay an extra day with her” *(girl 13 years)*

WHAT WE FOUND:

Time-Shared Living arrangement can work well for *some* children

We found it depends of five factors.

Results “SFI” 1.

The distance between the two homes

Long distance hampered the daily life of the child.

Integration of the child’s life outside the family (x)

Who is the child – the degree of sensitivity/resilience

Results “SFI”. 2

How parents cooperate

(If the conflict level is high – risk that the child will be left the responsibility to ensuring consistency in everyday life.)

The way visitation is organized - Rigid or flexible

Children’s needs change over time

Results: “Two homes one Family” 1

High degree of cooperation between parents

Children had (overall) high degree of influence on fifty/fifty or other kind of visitation. (flexible)

Results: “Two homes one Family” 2.

Parents were able to maintain focus on what is best for the child.

Children were satisfied with everyday-life with both parents

Time-Shared living

“So it is something physical, that when I have to carry the bag, so I can feel that my shoulder hurts sometimes.....for five or six days or so, then it goes away but on the seventh day I wear the bag again.....”

Mads, 10 years