

HOW DO I BECOME A MEMBER?

Your membership will enable you to be informed on critical issues surrounding divorce and families and have input on the direction of the SDCSP. It will enable the SDCSP to carry out goals to benefit children and families in South Dakota.

Please send a check or money order with the requested information below, payable to:

SD Coalition for Shared Parenting
Al KrCIL, Treasurer
916 Locust Street
Yankton, SD 57078

Please sign me up as a member of the SDCSP.
Enclosed is my tax-deductible** dues of \$20.00.

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Home phone: (____) _____

Work phone: (____) _____

Email Address _____

I can't join now but here is my tax-deductible** contribution of \$_____ to assist the South Dakota Coalition For Share Parenting in carrying out its goals. (Please indicate if you prefer your contribution to be anonymous)

** The South Dakota Coalition for Shared Parenting is recognized as an IRS tax-exempt, 501(c)(3) organization. Your dues and any contributions are tax deductible.

DISTURBING TRENDS!

Both Mothers and fathers play a vital role in the physical, psychological, emotional and spiritual well being of children. However, seventy percent of U.S. citizens believe the most significant social problem facing our country is the physical absence of the father from the home, resulting in a lack of involvement of fathers in the rearing and development of children. Consider the social "ills" our government spends money on to try to reduce -- teenage pregnancies, drug abuse, suicide, low self-esteem, incarceration, school dropout... every one of them is linked to family breakdown and parental absence.

The amount of contact non-custodial fathers have with their children diminishes over time following separation or divorce. The reasons include: lack of desire; lack of skills and knowledge regarding parenting; geographic mobility, lack of access due to actions of former spouse, parent alienation, inadequate financial resources, the artificial nature of "visitation", unequal parenting power, and lack of support for father involvement by the courts.

This is true in **South Dakota** where an estimated 2,241 children are affected by divorce each year. South Dakota custody laws fail to recognize a child's need for frequent, meaningful and ongoing relationships of both parents following separation or divorce. The laws are designed to pick a "winner" (preference for the mother) and a "loser" (typically the father). The "winner" is generally awarded 74% overnights per year with a child while the "loser" is afforded 26% overnights or less per year. In contrast, Alaska and Oklahoma custody law provides substantially equal access to the minor children at separation. Ultimately, in South Dakota, the child is the "loser".

WHAT IS SHARED PARENTING?

Shared Parenting is a joint, responsible parenting arrangement where children of divorce are provided the right to have both parents share in a balanced and equal manner, the responsibilities of caring and raising the children. Shared Parenting goes beyond joint legal custody and includes joint physical custody. Shared Parenting is not for parents who have a history of child abuse or neglect, domestic violence or who have no desire to be an active, responsible parent to their child (ren).

WHY SHARED PARENTING?

- Equal involvement of both parents and extended family promotes quicker adjustment and healing of children and reduces the risk of psychosocial concerns in the future
- Is in the best interest of most children
- Empowers both parents to maintain a strong parent-child relationship after divorce and minimizes the risk for one parent to alienate the children from the other
- Reduces conflict between parents when both realize that is the way it is
- Reduces loss and pain experienced by all grieving family members of divorce in the highly emotional arena of child custody and divorce
- A family, living apart moves ahead faster to provide for the well-being of their children following the trauma of divorce
- Removes the artificial nature of "visitation", the label of "custodial" or "noncustodial parent" and recognizes both parents as significant contributors to a child's development.
- Reduces the emotional and financial costs involved in the current adversarial, "win-lose" -- "he did-she did" world of custody litigation. These assets can be better used to establish two healthy, functional and child-friendly homes

THE SOUTH DAKOTA COALITION FOR SHARED PARENTING

- We believe children have the right to equal, responsible shared parenting and joint physical custody is the optimal parenting situation.
- We believe children should have access to involved grandparents and extended relatives.
- We believe gender preference should be eliminated in custody litigation.
- We believe that the "Best Interest of the Child" doctrine should be reasonable and consider the "Best Interest of the Family"
- We believe child support should be reasonable, realistically reflect the cost of the children's basic needs and reflect the relative contribution of both parents.
- We believe when parents are given equal rights, equal responsibility follows; when parents have equal access to their children and support levels are reasonable and reflect the true cost of raising a child, collaboration and cooperation are fostered; when equity is established between parents, positive growth will thrive within families.

WHAT ARE THE SDCSP GOALS?

- Foster society's recognition of a child's right to be guided, nurtured and supported by BOTH PARENTS regardless of marital status.
- Promote legislation that enforces a child's right to equal (50/50), shared parenting, except in proven cases where the child would be placed in imminent danger.
- Encourage legislation to replace the terms "Custodial" and "Noncustodial" parent and "Visitation" with family-friendly terms.

- Encourage legislation that requires the development of a "parenting time" plan within 30 days after separation.
- Develop a short/long-term parent education – support program for mothers and fathers of separation or divorce.
- Promote legislation that provides penalties for parents and third parties who attempt to alienate a child from the other parent.
- Foster legislation that encourages both parents to geographically live near their children in a dual parenting role.
- Encourage the development of a child support system that reflects the cost of children's basic needs, cost of two households, parent's income, IRS benefits and child-related expenses incurred when children are living with each parent.
- Facilitate education on the benefits of shared parenting through newsletters, technical assistance, family events, seminars and packets of information.

WHO SHOULD JOIN THE SDCSP?

Fathers, mothers, grandparents, extended relatives, adult children of divorce, educators, attorneys, family service providers, mental health professionals and other concerned persons.

The SDCSP is for all persons within South Dakota and surrounding area who believe in the mission of our organization, and want to see change occur so both parents share equally in the parenting responsibilities to their children following separation or divorce.

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THE SOUTH DAKOTA COALITION FOR SHARED PARENTING

*A Non-Profit, Tax Exempt
Membership Organization with the
belief that children have the right to
equal, responsible shared parenting,
equal access and opportunity with
both parents, the right to be guided
and nurtured by both parents and the
right to have decisions made by the
use of both parents' wisdom,
judgment and experience.*



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