

Fighting Parental Alienation

What is Parental Alienation Syndrome?

Parental alienation syndrome (PAS), is sometimes referred to as a disorder. However, what it describes is the systematic denigration of one parent by the other with the intent of alienating the child against the other parent. In simple terms it is the impact of those attempts at alienation on the child where the child may manifest a fear of the other parent and/or a reluctance to attend or participate in parenting time.

The syndrome recognizes that attempts at brainwashing or manipulating children at a young age may turn them against one of their parents. In most cases, the purpose of the alienation is usually to gain or retain custody without the involvement of the other parent. Often, this alienation extends beyond the other parent and includes the other parent's father's family and friends.

The "parental alienation syndrome" has rapidly become a focus of controversy within the mental health and the legal profession. Advocacy groups for mothers, fathers, and sexual abuse victims have often been recruited into the conflict. It has been offered in support of Motions for custody changes in Minnesota, although it has not gained widespread acceptance in Minnesota or in other states

The State of Minnesota adheres to the *Frye-Mack* standard for admission of evidence that is based on novel scientific techniques or principles. Under this two-prong standard, the scientific technique or principle at issue must be generally accepted within the relevant scientific community. In addition, its foundation must be reliable. Foundational reliability requires the proponent of a test to establish that the test itself is reliable and that its administration in the particular instance conformed to the procedure necessary to ensure reliability. The determination of whether a proper foundation has been established is largely within the discretion of the trial court.

Even if Parental Alienation Syndrome is not accepted as scientifically sound evidence in Court, the alienating behavior that can lead to the behavior symptoms in a child can certainly be presented as strong evidence to award or change custody so that the alienating behavior does not continue.

One of the first important issues to preventing PAS is to recognize at an early stage when Parental Alienation is occurring. It is at the earliest stages that it is the easiest to combat. If you wait too long much damage may already have occurred in the parent-child relationship. Perhaps so much so that it influences decisions of custody evaluators, courts and their presiding Judges.

What are the signs?

- Does your the other parent refuse to allow you to speak with your children on the telephone?
- Does the other parent intentionally plan other activities for your children during your parenting times?
- Does the other parent attempt to make your children see his/her new spouse as their real parent?
- Does the other spouse throw out mail, gifts and other packages that you send to your children?
- Does the other parent vilify and belittle you in the presence of your children or allow others to do so?
- Does the other parent refuse to inform you regarding your children's activities including school sports, extracurricular activities, plays and field trips?

- Does the other parent unilaterally cancel parenting time?
- Does the other parent refuse to inform you about your children's medical, dental, or other important appointments?

These are just a few of the many signs. If any of these things are occurring, you must act quickly.

Author: Maury D. Beaulier is a recognized leader in divorce and family law. He is a sought after speaker and has appeared on National programs on a myriad of family law and father's rights issues. He can be reached from his website at <http://www.divorceprofessionals.com>