

# International Conference on Shared Parenting 2015

## Best Practices for Legislative and Psycho-Social Implementation

Bonn, Germany, 9-11 December, 2015

**Thanks to all participants, we are looking forward to see you again 2017!**

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### Conference Conclusions

1. As shared parenting has been recognized by the research community, as well as by legal and mental health practitioners, as a viable post-separation parenting arrangement that is optimal to child development and well-being, there is consensus that both the legal and psycho-social implementation of shared parenting as a presumption should proceed without delay, with the full sanction and support of professional bodies and associations.
2. As shared parenting encompasses both shared parental authority (decision-making) and shared parental responsibility for the day-to-day upbringing and welfare of children, between fathers and mothers, in keeping with children's age and stage of development, there is consensus that legal implementation of shared parenting, including both the assumption of shared responsibilities and presumption of shared rights in regard to the parenting of children by fathers and mothers who are living together or apart, be enshrined in law.
3. As shared parenting is recognized as the most effective means for both reducing high parental conflict and preventing first-time family violence, there is consensus that legal and psycho-social implementation of shared parenting as a presumption should proceed with the goal of reducing parental conflict after separation. There is further consensus that legal and psycho-social implementation of shared parenting as a presumption be encouraged for high conflict families in particular, with the full sanction and support of professional bodies and associations.
4. There is a consensus that the above apply to the majority of children and families, but not to situations of substantiated family violence and child abuse. In such cases, a rebuttable presumption against shared parenting should apply. There is a consensus that the priority for further research on shared parenting should focus on the intersection of child custody and family violence, including child maltreatment in all its forms. There is further consensus that a priority for both the scientific and the legal and mental health practice communities should be the development of legal statutes and practice guidelines with respect to safety measures in cases of established family violence.
5. As there is mounting evidence that shared parenting can both prevent parental alienation, and is a potential remedy for existing situations of parental alienation in separated families, there is consensus that further exploration of the viability of a legal presumption of shared parenting in situations of parental alienation be undertaken.
6. As therapeutic and mediation services are vital to the success of shared parenting arrangements, there is a consensus that an accessible network of family relationship centres that offer family mediation and other relevant support services are critical components of any effort toward legislative and psychosocial implementation of shared parenting. We call on governments to establish such networks as a necessary adjunct to the establishment of a legal presumption of shared parenting.
7. We call on member states to fully adopt the Council of Europe Resolution of 2 October 2015. In particular, we call on member states to adopt the following provisions:
  - 5.5. Introduce into their laws the principle of shared residence following a separation.
  - 5.9. Encourage and develop mediation within the framework of judicial proceedings in family cases involving children.