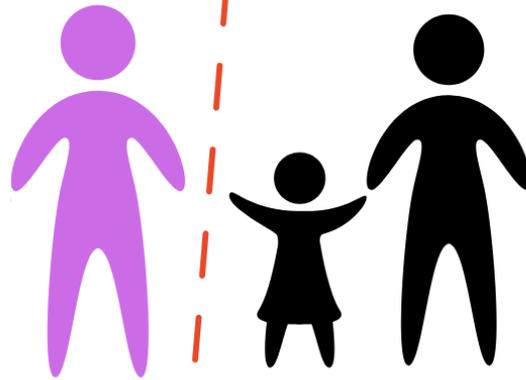


# Guide to Understanding Parental Alienation

in  
School



"psychological abuse"

-DSM-5 of APA  
code V995.51



by

Cheryl Mefferd BSN, RN  
Founder, Parental Alienation Speaks  
[parentalalienationspeaks.com](http://parentalalienationspeaks.com)

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# WHAT IS PARENTAL ALIENATION?

The intentional and strategic indoctrination of hate and/or guilt by one parent against the other, with the sole purpose of severing the bond spiritually, mentally, emotionally and physically with the other parent, thus gaining total power over the child, and ultimately the alienated parent.



(Mefferd, 2018)

\*the word "parent" can be substituted for caregiver or family member



## Parental Alienation Facts

- Parental Alienation (PA) is a form of psychological abuse
- Psychological abuse is the most under reported form of abuse
- Both moms & dads alienate children
- 25% of children from high conflict break-ups will become alienated
- Over half of all PA cases are reported as severe
- Poor psychological adjustment in a child occurs as a result of PA



(multiple citations)

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# What Is Psychological Abuse?



- Acts of commission OR omission
- Presence of hostile behavior OR the absence of positive parenting techniques
- Varies in intensity, from mild to extreme
- Varies in frequency, from occasional to ongoing
- May or may not be a conscious act by caregiver
- Difficult to identify b/c there are no physical marks & tends to occur in privacy of child's home

## Possible indicators of psychological abuse include...

- reduced cognitive/emotional function
- apathy
- crying/irritability
- awkward social behavior
- zoning out for long periods
- avoidance of eye contact
- flat affect
- numb to env stimuli
- indifferent to positive feedback
- poor self-image
- lack normal age-appropriate play skills
- excessively passive & obedient
- slowed language dev

# How Does a Child Learn to Reject a Parent Once Loved?

5

A child is indoctrinated into hating a parent once loved through the use of tactics by an alienating parent that fall into 5 main categories...

## #1. \*ISOLATION

limiting contact & communication between the child & the targeted parent

## #2. \*FEAR

poisonous messages to the child about the targeted parent in which he or she is portrayed as unloving, unsafe & unavailable

## #3. UNDERMINING AUTHORITY

undermining the authority of the targeted parent

## #4. ERASING & FALSE MEMORY IMPLANTATION

erasing & replacing the targeted parent in the heart and mind of the child

## #5. ENCOURAGING BETRAYAL

encouraging the child to betray the targeted parent's trust

\*isolation & fear are the tactics most prevalent in the school setting

(Baker, 2020)



The degree of a child's rejection of a parent depends on the types of tactics used, the groups of those tactics & the amount of time over which the alienating parent used them. If all of these are severe enough, the child will eventually completely reject a parent.

(Boch-Galhau, 2018)



# What Parental Alienation Might Look Like In School...

1. excessive school absences when child is with one parent as compared to the other
2. the child ignoring/refusing to interact w one parent when both parents are present- for instance, the child may look at the floor the entire time as instructed by the alienating parent
3. one parent seems to constantly coach child as to what to say
4. child does not offer information about one parent EVER
5. child seems to parrot/echo what one parent says about the other
6. child makes disparaging remarks about one parent but not the other
7. homework getting done when the child is with one parent and little to no work getting done when with the other
8. child apathetic, exhausted &/or zoning out more during the time child is with one parent as compared to the other
9. child is "sick" or complains of feeling ill during the time the child is with one parent as compared to the other
10. child doesn't show up for school events
11. child being physically "blocked" by one parent when both parents are present
12. one parent constantly making statements to teachers/school staff stating the other parent is "not allowed" to see child or is "dangerous"
13. other family members/friends making statements to school staff trying to reiterate that one parent is "not allowed" to see child or is "dangerous"
14. one parent constantly changing addresses/contact information of child
15. one parent deleting other parent's contact information from records
16. one parent seemingly trying to recruit school staff to form an alliance against the other parent

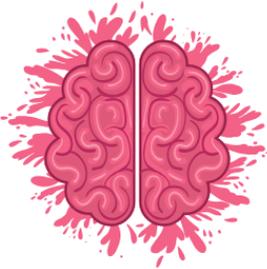




## **\*When a child rejects a parent, they will exhibit these behaviors...**

Please note: these behaviors are specific to parental alienation only

1. There is a campaign of denigration against the target parent, the child becomes obsessed w hatred of him/her
2. There are weak, frivolous & absurd reasons for the rejection of the target parent
3. Lack of ambivalence towards alienating parent-one parent becomes all good while the other is all bad
4. Child strongly asserts the decision to reject the target parent is his/her "own will"
5. Absence of guilt about how target parent is treated
6. Reflexive support for the alienating parent w no interest in hearing target parent's point of view
7. Use of borrowed scenarios and ideas adopted from the alienating parent to make accusations against target parent
8. Rejection spreads to target parent's entire family including grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins, etc. (Baker, 2020)



## **Because of the Damage A Child's Brain Endures as a Result of Parental Alienation, A Child May...**

1. Live in a persistent state of fear
2. No longer have the ability to regulate emotions & stress
3. No longer reach developmental milestones
4. Lack the ability to receive love & positive stimuli
5. No longer have the ability to develop normal social interactions

(Understanding the effects of maltreatment on brain development, 2015)



# How Schools Can Help Stop Parental Alienation...

1. Learn the signs of psychological abuse/parental alienation
2. Keep BOTH parents informed of child's grades, absences, upcoming events & all things child related - consider using apps like skyward, remind, classroom dojo, seesaw
3. Allow parent-teacher conferences to take place w mothers & fathers separately
4. Demand documentation such as court paperwork before making changes to any school contact info
5. Demand documentation such as court paperwork before banning a parent from school premises or refusing to provide info to one parent
6. Refuse to be part of a parent's campaign against the other parent
7. Report psychological abuse to the correct authorities - in most states, you are considered a mandated reporter

## Long Term Effects of Parental Alienation May Include...



- low self-esteem
- self-hatred
- insecure attachments
- substance abuse
- guilt
- anxiety
- depression
- fears
- phobias
- trust issues

# Guide to Understanding Parental Alienation

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"a serious form  
of family  
violence"

(Harman, Bernet & Harman, 2019)

"caregiver child  
relation  
problem"

-WHO, 2018

ICD-11 code

QE52

"psychological  
maltreatment"

(Baker, Asayan, & LaCheen-Baker, 2016)

"psychological  
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"...no longer a  
custody issue  
but a child  
protection issue"

(Boch-Galhau 2018)



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