


Understanding Without Undermining The Child's Voice In The Context Of Family Litigation: A Worksheet

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Which of these mutually compatible factors may be unduly influencing the child's thoughts, wishes and opinions regarding the extant litigation?

Is the child reacting to “incidental” and transitory factors?

- ❖ Access to better gizmos, gadgets and stuff
- ❖ Broader privileges, fewer rules, less supervision
- ❖ Avoiding angry neighbor, scary dog, smelly kitchen

How do peer relationships and proximity impact the child's voice?

- ❖ School district
- ❖ Neighborhood
- ❖ Bus route
- ❖ Proximity to peer group and hang-outs
- ❖ Access to peer-endorsed “cool” stuff
- ❖ Avoiding bullies, peer conflicts

How do changing roles and relationships within each home influence the child?

- ❖ Parent's new partner(s), their children (and pets)
- ❖ Parent's new work, schedule, habits and routines
- ❖ Child's new responsibilities and chores

Does the parenting schedule mean that the child will miss out on other activities?

- ❖ Television and entertainment
- ❖ Absent sibling's or parent's events
- ❖ Extracurricular activities (e.g., band, soccer try-outs, church group)
- ❖ Peer social events (e.g., school dance, team “away game”)

Is the child worried for the parent, sibling, or property left behind?

- ❖ “Will mom drink or drug while I’m gone?”
- ❖ “Will dad try to kill himself again?”
- ❖ “Who will take care of the new baby if I’m not there?”
- ❖ “Will my stuff be safe?”
- ❖ “Will you stay out of my room?”

Has the child been adultified?

That is, has the child been prematurely promoted to serve as a parent’s partner, ally and/or confidant especially in the wake of a significant family change

Has the child been parentified?

That is, has the child been prematurely promoted to serve as a parent’s caregiver?

Has the child been infantilized?

That is, has the child been implicitly prevented from growing toward independence and autonomy.

Has the child been alienated?

That is, has the child’s security in Parent B been needlessly undermined by Parent A (or another actor)?

Has the child been misaligned?

That is, has the child’s security in parent B been inappropriately reinforced by Parent A (or another actor)?