

PROBLEM OF MANIPULATION DURING CHILD EXPERTISE

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Manipulation includes activities in which adults use children to accomplish some goals, without taking into consideration child's needs, feelings and interests. Everyday we witness child manipulation, but it is especially present during expertise in child custody cases and in the cases of determining child's credibility.

In divorces, each parent can be perceived as manipulative, the one who has custody or the one that doesn't. In such cases manipulation is in forms of different behaviours, messages both verbal and non verbal, with goal to exclude the other parent from child's life.

Research show that when child refuses to see one parent, it is a result of psychological vulnerability of each parent and a child, personality of parent and child as well as of parental approach.

Most common reasons for manipulation, according to Waldron and Joanis (1996) are in the corner of marginalized parent, the one parent that usually has emotional and psychological issues as well as weak parental skills. Parents tend to manipulate when they feel that injustice has been done to them, when they fear of losing a child, strong distrust in the other par-

ent. That all result in a belief that child might be in danger when with the other parent and manipulation serves to protect a child.

Manipulative parent does not have concern for child's emotions, needs and consequences that are most commonly low self-esteem, guilt, depression, lack of trust. Encouraging a child to betray one parent will result in numerous psychological consequences.

If it is a child that needs to testify, it is important to establish whether child's testimony is under the influence of adults. It is important to state that manipulation is a form of child abuse and therefore a criminal activity.

To eliminate or at least diminish manipulation of children during court procedures, it is very important to establish child's credibility and to carefully evaluate parents to decide which of them should have custody of child. It all needs special education, constant cooperation with centre for social services. It is impossible to make any decision, especially during divorce, without carefully observing parents, child-parent interaction and complete child's functioning in its social surroundings.