

About.com Divorce Support

What Should You do if The Non-Custodial Parent Refuses to Visit the Children?

By Cathy Meyer, About.com Guide

Question: What Should You do if The Non-Custodial Parent Refuses to Visit the Children?

Answer:

A question I often here from custodial parents is, "what can I do if my child's father/mother doesn't show for [visitation](#)¹." As parents, we feel our child's pain when the other parent fails to exercise [parental visitation](#)². It is only natural we want to "do" something to take away their pain.

When a parent chooses not to be active in a child's life damage is done. Children are left to feel [unworthy, unloved and worthless](#)³ due to the lack of self-esteem that comes along with being rejected by a parent.



iStockPhoto.com

We can't protect our children from all of life's disappointments. In this situation though there are things we can do to keep the impact of an absent parent from causing too much destruction and help [visitation go smoothly](#)⁴.

How to [Help Your Child Cope](#)⁵ With Parental Rejection:

- Don't allow your child to see your disappointment and concern. If you are [angry with your ex](#)⁶ keep it to yourself, do not share those feelings with your child. Talk with your child and allow your child to express his/her feelings. Be reassuring by showing them they are loved by you.

When talking about your ex, explain to the child that his/her absence is not a reflection of the child's worth. Let the child know the other parent is having difficulties that get in the way of him/her understanding how hurtful the absence is. It is important your child understand that the problem is not with him/her but with the parent who is not visiting.

- Talk to the other parent. He/she may not realize the negative impact on the child. Some parents aren't emotionally intelligent enough to know the importance of their presence in their child's life. Assure the other parent that your only motive is to [co-parent](#)⁷ in a way that is best for the child. If, after communicating your concerns the other parent still refuses to visit, let it be. He/she may not care and where there is a lack of caring, there is a lack of concern.
- If you are dealing with a non-custodial parent who makes plans with your child then doesn't show, have a back-up plan. If the non-custodial parent is inconsistent, the best way to keep that from harming your child is distraction with other activities.

I encourage all non-custodial parents to maintain a consistent [visitation schedule](#)⁸ with your children. Also, custodial parents should encourage the relationship between child and non-custodial parent. Don't allow hard feelings and conflict with your ex to harm your child. Put [your child's needs](#)⁹ before your needs to lash out at your ex spouse.

Related Content:

[Parental Obligations During Divorce: Part I](#)¹⁰

[Parental Obligations During Divorce: Part II](#)¹¹

This About.com page has been optimized for print. To view this page in its original form, please visit: http://divorcesupport.about.com/od/visitation/f/no_visitation.htm
©2013 About.com, Inc. All rights reserved.

Links in this article:

1. http://singleparents.about.com/od/visitswithyourkids/ss/see_your_kids.htm
2. http://divorcesupport.about.com/od/childcustody/a/cust_visitation.htm
3. <http://divorcesupport.about.com/od/childrenanddivorce/ht/effectsonchild.htm>
4. <http://divorcesupport.about.com/od/visitation/tp/visitationtips.htm>
5. <http://divorcesupport.about.com/od/thechildsperspective/f/childseyes.htm>
6. <http://divorcesupport.about.com/od/meetingyourchildsneeds/f/angrychild.htm>
7. <http://divorcesupport.about.com/od/cooperativeparenting/ht/cooparenting.htm>
8. <http://divorcesupport.about.com/od/visitation/qt/What-To-Do-If-Your-Child-Doesnt-Want-To-Visit-After-Divorce.htm>
9. <http://divorcesupport.about.com/od/meetingyourchildsneeds/ht/childsneeds.htm>
10. http://divorcesupport.about.com/od/childrenanddivorce/a/parents_obligation1.htm
11. http://divorcesupport.about.com/od/childrenanddivorce/a/parental_obligations2.htm