

Disorganized Attachment in Young Children: Manifestations, Etiology, and Implications for Child Custody

S. MARGARET LEE

Independent Practice, Mill Valley, California

ROBERT L. KAUFMAN

Independent Practice, Oakland and Mill Valley, California

CAROL GEORGE

Mills College, Oakland, California

Disorganized attachment is a troubling relationship in which an infant or young child demonstrates extreme conflict, contradictory and disorganized behavior as they seek caretaking from a parent. When properly assessed and identified, behaviors associated with disorganized attachment suggest the presence of serious threats to healthy psychological development of the child, and serious shortcomings in the parent's ability to provide well-attuned and empathic caretaking and for the child's safety. Given the population and circumstances of families referred for child custody evaluations, we posit that there is a strong risk for disorganized attachment in these families, and that evaluators should understand better how to evaluate whether such a dynamic exists. Such understanding provides essential data in formulating constructive recommendations for the court that are based on a child's needs and a parent's caretaking capacity. The authors outline what makes disorganized attachment unique, discuss how the phenomenon can manifest in the context of conflicted divorce, and offer suggestions for how to assess disorganized attachment within the evaluation process.

KEYWORDS *disorganized attachment, high-conflict divorce, trauma*

Submitted September 14, 2007; Revised September 10, 2008; Accepted January 17, 2009.
Address correspondence to S. Margaret Lee, 207 Miller Ave., #3, Mill Valley, CA 94941.
E-mail: drlee1@hotmail.com

An unusually high percentage of cases referred for child custody evaluations involve families whose lives sustain high levels of interpersonal conflict and emotional unrest. Due to their age and developmental level, infants and young children are especially vulnerable to experiencing the untoward effects of such conflict (Johnston & Roseby, 1997). Evaluators are often faced with the challenge of understanding very troubling child behaviors, such as a young child who acts afraid of the parent at those moments when the child also desires to be close. Such disturbed behavior patterns often arise in family situations where parents, despite their apparent dedication to and love for their children, are not able to provide consistent, timely and nurturing care and are unable to protect the child from hurtful conflict.

Questions arise as the custody evaluator strives to understand such behavior in the larger family context. Are these reactions to situational factors and the strain of contested divorce? Or are they clues to deeper problems in parent-child attunement that could have significant and long-term effects on the child's fundamental psychological well-being? Are we observing a parent whose attention and attunement are temporarily diverted? Or is it the case that a parent has not developed the capacity to be emotionally present and effective due to his/her own background of trauma and loss? The answers to these questions are critical to making informed custody recommendations.

In line with other articles in this issue of the *Journal of Child Custody*, attachment theory offers practitioners a paradigmatic shift in understanding the way these relations can be understood. Attachment is fundamental to all human children as it is rooted in the biological underpinnings of an evolutionary-based behavioral system (Bowlby, 1969/1982; van IJzendoorn & Sagi, 2008), and not just the product of the personality style of the parent and the child's temperament (Vaughn, Bost, & van IJzendoorn, 2008).

Based on almost 40 years of research, attachment theory provides us with a theoretical structure as well as practical guidelines for observing and understanding the quality and consistency of physical and affective parent-child bonds. This puts clinicians and custody evaluators in a much better position to determine a child's immediate needs, needs based on the kind of protection and care that research has shown contributes to development of a coherent sense of self, the capacity for emotion regulation and autonomous functioning, and which lays the foundation for expectations for future relationships. Childhood attachment patterns are strong predictors for development and psychological functioning in adulthood. Infants and young children with secure attachments are more likely than insecure children to develop into adults who can form deep, gratifying and reciprocal relationships (Thompson, 2008). Children with insecure attachment relationships are at substantially greater risk of developing adult relationships where intimacy, reciprocity and mutuality are compromised as a result of defensive operations that were developed early in life in the service of managing attachment distress (West & Sheldon-Keller, 1994).

At the same time, the attachment lens provides us a way to understand the state of mind of caregivers, and the effectiveness of how parents address children's needs for security and stability (George & Solomon, 2008; Slade, Grienenberger, Bernbach, Levy, & Locker, 2005). Infants develop secure attachments when caregivers are able to read their behavioral and emotional cues, understand the implicit and explicit needs expressed, and address those needs in timely and effective ways (Ainsworth, Blehar, Waters, & Wall, 1978; Goldsmith, Oppenheim, & Wanlass, 2004). This form of responsiveness is crucial when an infant or child is distressed.

The construct of *attachment disorganization* can help the custody evaluator understand some of the most problematic and confusing parent-child interaction and communication patterns. Disorganization reflects persistent patterns of miscuing, insensitivity, and failed responsivity that disrupt, interfere with, and threaten a child's sense of his or her parent as being the stronger and wiser protective figure in the attachment-caregiving relationship. A child cannot develop an effective strategy for seeking nurturance at those times when care is needed most as the parent has not developed the capacity to provide organized and timely nurturing at those critical junctures (George & Solomon, 2008; Lyons-Ruth & Jacobvitz, 2008).

"Parent-child attachment" is a term often used by custody evaluators but not often well understood. Many child custody evaluators may not have access to or the knowledge about how to conduct a comprehensive attachment assessment. The purpose of this article is to suggest ways in which the underlying constructs of attachment can inform child custody investigations and shed light on some of our most difficult cases, even when formal assessment is not available. This will include discussing how procedures in child custody evaluations can be modified in the interest of understanding severe problems in the parent-child bond and identifying the effects of situational upheaval linked to divorce dynamics.

PATTERNS OF ATTACHMENT

Organized Attachment

Attachment research describes different and distinct patterns of attachment, called classification groups, which reflect consistent, organized behavior in terms of how an infant interacts with specific caregivers upon reunion after separation from them in a laboratory assessment procedure called the Strange Situation (Ainsworth et al., 1978; see the introductory paper in this volume for an expanded description). According to attachment theory, attachment events, such as reunion following separation, are critical moments in a child's day to re-establish his or her relationship with the parent, especially if the separation has been long and/or the child has been distressed or experienced unusual events during the separation. These are

times when the parent's responses to a child's need not only soothes the child, but also contribute to a child's confidence—or lack thereof—in the parent's accessibility in times of need. Infants and young children seek physical proximity and may require physical contact. Ainsworth and her colleagues (1978) importantly pointed out that separations and reunions, and other contexts that “activate attachment” (such as being startled, ill), are not times when the child should look sturdy, independent, confused, or angry.

The structured Strange Situation procedure was designed to activate attachment and exploratory behavior systematically under specific standardized conditions of increasing moderate stress (Ainsworth et al., 1978; Solomon & George, 2008). Three classification patterns are “organized” and most children in normal parenting contexts develop one of the organized patterns. *Securely* attached infants show some form of distress when they are separated from their parent—by crying or showing diminished capacities for exploration even if they are not visibly upset. Upon reunion, secure infants seek their parent out for comfort. They establish clear psychological contact (e.g., smile and greeting that evidences preference for the parent as opposed to the stranger) or direct and immediate physical contact, and resume exploration and play. Other infants demonstrate organized patterns that are considered to be *insecure*—*avoidant* and *ambivalent-resistant*. *Avoidant* infants turn away from their parent, and instead focus on toys or other activities, giving the impression that they are independent and do not need or desire comfort. This is believed to occur with a parent who cannot tolerate their child's attachment distress and has ignored or rejected the infant's pleas for closeness and nurturing (Ainsworth et al., 1978; Main, 1990). *Ambivalent-resistant* infants show a combination of seeking closeness from their parent mixed with angry distress and agitation; they are difficult to soothe and often cranky. This is believed to occur with a parent who is inconsistently responsive, even when their infants are close by and the parent is presumably paying attention. The ambivalent-resistant child is uncertain about how and when a parent will respond, and stays watchful and close by to maximize the chances of parental care (Main, 1990; Solomon, George, & De Jong, 1995).

Disorganized Attachment

There are infants whose response to the Strange Situation is contradictory and whose response patterns during the Strange Situation do not fit within the framework of organized attachment. Main and Solomon (1986, 1990) proposed the category of *disorganized attachment* to describe relationships in which a child's ability to make the transitions between exploration, separation and reunion and to approach, signal or avoid the parent is seriously interrupted. The process of establishing physical and psychological contact

with the parent is compromised by fear and/or severe conflict. Main and Solomon (1990) identify the following responses to the parent as "disorganized":

- A highly contradictory pattern of sequential behavior, marked by strong proximity seeking abruptly followed by or combined with avoidance.
- Simultaneous display of contradictory behavior, such as seeking nurturing while also angry.
- Incomplete or undirected behavior, such as when a child is crying very hard, but moves away from, instead of toward, the parent.
- Stereotypic movements or odd postures without apparent aim that occur only when the parent is present.
- Freezing or very slow movements in the parent's presence.
- Indices of being frightened of the parent.
- Rapid changes in affect or shifts in behavior to the extent that the child appears to be disoriented.

These behavior patterns work against a parent's ability to soothe a distressed child and hence re-integrate the child-parent relationship. They indicate that the child cannot use the parent to regulate the emotions associated with separation, reunion, or exploration, and is overwhelmed by sequences of parental absence and return. These responses are extremely worrisome. Studies observing parents of disorganized infants have shown that their interactions are frightening and intrusive (Jacobvitz, Leon, & Hazen, 2006; Lyons-Ruth, Bronfman, & Parsons, 1999). Main and Solomon (1990) suggest that disorganized behaviors indicate that the child is in an untenable dilemma vis-à-vis the parent—the parent who should be their source of security is also a source of threat. The result is that the child's organized efforts to obtain proximity to the caretaker "collapse," leaving the child vulnerable to affective instability and dysregulation, as well as intense fear and helplessness (Main & Solomon, 1990).

In this article, we focus on such disorganized behavior. When the core dynamic in a child-parent relationship is "fear without solution" (Main & Hesse, 1990), one is likely observing disorganization in the attachment relationship. Even to untrained observers, such behavior (which sometimes occurs very quickly or in fast succession) seems odd and out of keeping with the moment. When the conflict is severe enough, all children may show disorganized attachment behavior, even though the relationship might not be classified as "disorganized" in a formal attachment assessment. What is important is that when such behavior is observed it is indicative of compromises occurring in the relationship that research has shown may create long-term changes in previously organized and stable child-parent attachment relationship. These compromises may be situational, such as divorce and visitation or parents fighting. The indices of disorganization, including

debilitating fear, threat, helplessness, and feeling overwhelmed, should be taken seriously, even if one feels that the child's care has been compromised prior to the divorce (George & Solomon, 2008). Should these qualities in the relationship continue, the development of a disorganized attachment is associated with a strong risk for future problems in school, with peers, and developmental risk and psychopathology (Lyons-Ruth & Jacobvitz, 2008; Sroufe, Egeland, Carlson, & Collins, 2005).

The construct in attachment theory that accounts for long-term effects of attachment relationships is the "internal working model," an internalized representation of the attachment relationship (Bowlby, 1969/1982, 1973). The working model contains the understanding of "who are attachment figures, where they can be found and how they may be expected to respond" (Bowlby, 1973, p. 203). Based on the child's experience with attachment figures, the child develops a working model of self as valued or devalued, competent or incompetent. The child also develops more generalized perspectives, such as what to expect in future attachment relationships and whether the world is trustworthy or not (Bowlby, 1969/1982, 1973; Bretherton & Munholland, 2008).

The disorganization indices listed above were developed for infants and toddlers. Starting in the preschool years, children begin to take charge of attachment figures and situations. They develop what are called "controlling" attachment behaviors. Controlling behaviors can be hostile (e.g., be rude, embarrass, humiliate) or caregiving (e.g., role reversed nurturing) (Main & Cassidy, 1988; Solomon & George, 2008). At first glance, controlling behavior may seem contradictory to the goal of seeking proximity to and comfort from the parent. However, these behaviors are understood to be strategies that help children manage their own fears and force parents to step up to their caretaking responsibilities (George & Solomon, 2008; Main & Cassidy, 1988). Via trying to control the parent, or taking care of the parent, the child attempts to create some structure and organization in the attachment relationship.

In a similar context, older children can also become dissociated, disoriented, and show infant-like disorganized behavior. This can result in a loss of objectivity and awareness of the actual situation. During representational assessment such as doll play (as compared with behavioral observations with the parent in the Strange Situation), these children demonstrate strong intrapsychic disorganization. This disorganization can be seen in both standardized doll play (Solomon et al., 1995) as well as informal doll play that activates the attachment system. They are flooded with distress and fear, as evidenced by themes of destruction, death, helplessness or frightened constriction (i.e., representational freezing) (Solomon et al., 1995). Researchers have found similar representational patterns in the interview assessments of parents of older disorganized children as well as those of parents of disorganized infants. The parents of disorganized children

are frightened, frightening, helpless, confrontational, and role-reversed (George & Solomon, 2008).

The Parent's Contribution to the Child's Attachment Disorganization

Readers will note that we primarily identify mothers as the caretaker when describing attachment behavior and relationships. While Bowlby (1969/1982) and Ainsworth (1989) both wrote that the child develops multiple attachments, attachment research has largely been conducted on mothers and their children (Howes & Spieker, 2008). Thus there is a paucity of research on father-child attachment. One recent study with fathers suggests that the underlying mechanisms of parents feeling helpless and overwhelmed are the foundation of father-infant disorganized attachment, just as they have been demonstrated in mother-child attachment (Munroe, 2007). There is, however, quite a bit of information about mothers' contributions to disorganized attachment.

The question arises as to what kinds of behavioral and interactive patterns in a parent might elicit disorganized and controlling behaviors in a child. Historically, disorganized attachment was thought to arise when attachment figures are frightening, such as when they exhibit directly threatening or frightening behavior (Main & Hesse, 1990) or are intrusive and extremely insensitive (Lyons-Ruth, Easterbrooks, & Cibelli, 1997). Indeed, studies show that risk for disorganization is associated with frightening and intrusive forms of parenting. The proportion of disorganized children is higher in samples with parental child maltreatment, alcoholism and chemical dependency, and in some studies with a higher incidence of maternal depression and bipolar disorder, than in community or non-psychiatric groups of parents (for review, see Lyons-Ruth & Jacobvitz, 2008). Up to 80% of abused children are assessed as having disorganized attachments, reflecting in dramatic fashion the dilemma of the child needing and seeking to rely on the person who is also the threat to their security.

From our perspective, what is striking is the prevalence of disorganized attachments in children who do not have obviously abusive, hostile and intrusive parents. In community and low-risk samples, attachment disorganization has also been shown to be related to extreme failures in parental attunement, including the parent becoming frightened herself or self-absorbed (i.e., lapses into a dissociated state) (Hesse & Main, 2006; Main, Kaplan, & Cassidy, 1985). Main found these types of maternal interactive patterns to be related to mother's *unresolved* state of mind about their own traumatic experiences. Mothers who were unresolved regarding past experiences of loss or abuse were more likely to have disorganized infants than mothers who were resolved or who had not experienced loss or trauma (Main et al., 1985). When the mother's attachment state of mind is *unresolved*, maternal sensitivity, vigilance, monitoring and responsiveness are

more likely to be compromised (Jacobvitz et al., 2006). Parents who themselves have histories of unresolved grief or earlier trauma can become unexplainably distant or dissociated in the presence of the child, which in turn renders the parent unavailable and frightens the child abruptly and without apparent cause. Such lapses in parental attention and behavior are thought sometimes to be due to subtle external cues that trigger re-experiencing the effects of the trauma (Hesse & Main, 1999; Hesse & van IJzendoorn, 1998; Main & Hesse, 1990).

An increasing number of studies, however, show that many parents who are *not* unresolved have infants and children whose attachments are disorganized (for review see George & Solomon, 2008). The question that emerges from these studies is, "Why would this occur if the parent is not unresolved?" This body of research suggests that it is not unresolved state of mind per se, but the parents' helplessness that may be the intergenerational link to the child's disorganized attachment (Lyons-Ruth, Yellin, Melnick, & Atwood, 2003; Solomon & George, 2006, in press). Solomon and George (2006, in press) found that mothers of disorganized children describe not having a attachment figure who cared for them in situations in their own childhood that threatened their emotional or physical safety, such as loss of a family member, abuse, or parental rage (e.g., fighting, dysregulated emotional states associated with substance abuse or psychiatric conditions). Now mothers themselves, they find themselves *helpless* to provide care and comfort for their own children.

Clearly, the child's fear in relation to the parent is at the core of disorganization. The actual parental behavior that generates such fear in a child can include overtly frightening and insensitive hostile-intrusive interactions, serious forms of parent mis-attunement (e.g., self-absorption, dissociative states), or a parent's own fear, helplessness and feeling overwhelmed. The field of attachment has now developed a broader view of the parent-child interactive processes to help understand Main and Hesse's (1990) original "frightened-frightening" hypothesis. What appears to be the underlying source of fear is a child's perception of the parent's failure to respond to his or her attachment needs in those exact moments when the child needs the proximity and care (George & Solomon, 2008). Disorganization is the "break-down" of the attachment-caregiving systems and suggests that the parent has essentially "abdicated" the role of caregiver-protector (Solomon & George, 2000). And we propose in this paper that it is this broader view of disorganization that may help child custody evaluators identify and understand the risk for disorganization in divorcing families, even when parent-child or parent-parent interactions are not more obviously frightening to outside observers.

THE MATRIX OF HIGH-CONFLICT DIVORCE

The extensive literature on high-conflict divorce suggests that impasses in the marital relationship and ensuing divorce process occur in several arenas. The

source of some components may be internal, such as intense loss, rejection, or even re-activation of previously experienced trauma. The source of other factors may be external, including prolonged and embittered litigation. And the source of still other factors is interactional, as when the separation is precipitous and fraught with anger or even violence. The result of this dynamic web is intense and palpable bitterness, ongoing acrimony, and in the most severe cases, domestic violence witnessed by children (Johnston & Campbell, 1988; Johnston & Roseby, 1997).

There is ample literature that suggests that such high-conflict dynamics and events can cause psychological disruption and ensuing emotional and behavioral problems in children. Solomon and George (1999a) found an elevated proportion of infants judged disorganized in the Strange Situation in families whose parents were involved in a high-conflict divorce. In such cases, we have also observed a high incidence of caretakers lacking attunement with and responsiveness to the child, qualities believed to be risk factors for disorganized attachment. As such, we alert child custody evaluators to be especially cognizant of the potential impact of the following on young children:

- *Intense marital strife*: Overt strife is frightening to infants and young children who cannot understand, much less integrate, situations that are inherently threatening (Cox, Paley, Payne, & Burchinal, 1999; Cummings, Iannotti, & Zahn-Waxler, 1985). Covert or unstated tension, when high enough, can also be de-stabilizing for infants, especially when affective disruptions continue and the conflict remains overwhelming. Sadness, detachment, over-controlled hostility and emotional withdrawal compromise caretaker availability and stability and can engender fear in a vulnerable child, contributing to a disorganized attachment.
- *Witnessing domestic violence*: Exposure to domestic violence, whether it is situational and clustered around the parent's separation, or a more long-standing pattern of battering, is associated generally with marked deleterious effects on infants and preschool children (Kelly, 2000; Osofsky, 1997), and more specifically with attachment disorganization (Zeanah et al., 1999). Not only are there clear effects on behavior, but also it is believed that such exposure causes disruptions in autonomic arousal. Children who witness domestic violence, and live in the crucible of high-conflict divorce are likely to have poorer psychological adjustment than those children whose parents are in the midst of high-conflict divorce, but are not engaged in domestic violence (McNeal & Amato, 1998). Very young children exposed to partner violence are prone to experiencing developmental delays, sleep disturbance, excessive irritability, fears of being alone and regression in language acquisition (Kelly, 2000).
- *Emotional dysregulation in the environment*: In high-conflict divorce, emotions are invariably high. Absorbed in their own distress, parents are at risk of not attending to their child's distress or to how their behavior

may be upsetting their child. Loosening of affective controls may come at expected times, such as on direct transitions between parents or prior to court dates. However, in high-conflict situations, intense emotions can arise suddenly, prompted by unexpected events or stimuli. This could range from an unanticipated meeting on the street with the former spouse or partner, to receiving a call from their attorney, to reading an enraging email.

- *Loss within the divorce re-activating prior loss:* There is a sense of loss in every divorce, regardless of how amicable it is. High-conflict divorce is so problematic because it is characterized by intense mutual distrust, anger and blame. For parents who have sustained significant prior losses in life, the failed marriage or partnership can reactivate the feelings of the earlier loss. When that earlier loss remains unresolved and not well integrated psychologically, the parent is prone to mental and emotional disorganization under the strain of the high-conflict divorce. In a sense, the open wound inherent in the high-conflict divorce serves to keep open the wound of the prior loss. This disequilibrium may well set the stage for disorganizing the child's attachment system. The more a caregiver's own unresolved fearful experiences disrupt their ability to attend to the child, the less regulated the parent-child interactions become (Lyons-Ruth & Jacobvitz, 2008; Solomon & George, in press).

APPLYING ATTACHMENT DISORGANIZATION TO CHILD CUSTODY EVALUATIONS

Prevalence of Disorganized Attachment in Custody Cases Referred for Evaluation

Only a small portion of all parents who divorce require a child custody evaluation (Stahl, 1994). Unfortunately for the children, this subgroup of divorcing parents is characterized by many of the characteristics that have been identified as putting children at risk for disorganized attachments. These families are frequently referred with pending allegations of domestic violence, child abuse, ongoing high levels of conflict, depression in parents and children, loss and substance abuse. Furthermore, Johnston and Campbell (1988) describe the emotional vulnerability of parents in high-conflict divorce for whom narcissistic wounds have been reopened in the acrimonious divorce process. Previously unresolved traumas are activated, which fuels the parent to decompensate and adds to the difficulty of moving through the divorce process in an adaptive way that shields the child from unmanageable distress. This quality of the parental state of mind in high-conflict divorce can disrupt a child's organized attachment behavior. Research regarding reports of the actual rate of disorganized attachments in this population is hampered by the fact that too few evaluators systematically

assess for this phenomenon. However, in the literature involving high-conflict divorces and alienated children, there are references to role reversals, heightened fear and separation anxiety, all common indicators of disorganized attachments in children in this age group (Johnston, Walters, & Olesen, 2005).

It is the experience of the clinical authors of this paper that we see more children manifesting some forms of disorganized attachment behavior in custody evaluations than in our more general clinical practice. To date, there has been little research in this area with the exception of Solomon and George's (1999) research on babies' and toddlers' overnight visitation in divorcing families described earlier in this paper. We stress that high parental conflict, failure of the parents to coordinate for their child, and high maternal anxiety about the child when in the father's care, all contributed to interactions and state of mind in the mother conducive to disorganization.

Aside from this research by Solomon and George, there are few systematic studies of divorcing families that have included any measure of attachment or parental caregiving. It is therefore difficult to determine whether indices of disorganization reflect disorganized attachments or some other phenomena that are overwhelming the child-parent relationship. It is also difficult to determine if signs of disorganization that may appear in the initial throes of divorce are stable across time and what this means for the child. Solomon and George (1999), for example, found that visitation arrangements and relationships changed over time; however they found that infant disorganization predicted problems in the toddler a year later, irrespective of the current parental arrangement. More research is needed in the area of divorce to confirm the importance of early disorganization in young children in divorcing families. We would expect that this research will parallel studies in other risk samples that demonstrate that early attachment disorganization contributes to developmental risk, despite changes in relationships and other developmental inputs during childhood and adolescence (Sroufe et al., 2005).

Challenges for the Custody Evaluator

It is widely assumed and at times codified in the law (e.g., Cal Rule of Court 5.220), that child custody evaluators should attend to the nature of the parent-child relationships within the family and specifically to the child's attachment to each parent. Although the allegations of problematic adult behaviors sometimes become the focus of an evaluation, the nature, depth and quality of the parent-child relationship generally will be a key variable in the consideration of various custody and caretaking schedules and accompanying recommendations. This is particularly true when the evaluation involves young children or infants, whose rhythms and "scheduled" interactions with attachment figures are in flux.

It is incumbent upon child custody evaluators to observe and describe the interactions between children and their parents (American Psychological Association, 1994). Observations of high-conflict families frequently suggest the presence of disorganized attachment behavior in the children. We note too that, in their attempts to describe parent-child relationships, it is not uncommon that child custody evaluators will misuse the concepts of attachment, including the notion of a primary attachment relationship and the depth of attachment, often describing attachment in terms of "strength" rather than security. There are further misunderstandings about "diagnosing" the attachment typology and patterns, as evaluators confuse parental warmth or other behaviors they deem socially desirable (e.g., providing exploration or intellectual activities) as a defining quality, as opposed to how the child seeks out and responds to the parent when attachment distress is activated.

We are aware that the presence of a disorganized attachment is particularly difficult to assess within a child custody evaluation. Many custody evaluators write authoritatively about parent-child attachment, but are not familiar with and/or have not taken the steps to assess it adequately. Classification of a child or parent as falling into one of the four groups is not valid without formal assessment and evaluators must be very careful to state clearly what has been observed from formal assessment versus naturalistic contexts (e.g., home visit).

Paradoxically, many evaluators are not familiar with, and most evaluators do not use, the well-established research methodologies, such as the Strange Situation developed by Ainsworth (Ainsworth et al., 1978), Attachment Doll Play Assessment (Solomon et al., 1995), the Adult Attachment Interview (George, Kaplan, & Main, 1984/1985/1996; Main & Goldwyn, 1984/1998), the Caregiving Interview (George & Solomon, 1996/2002/2005/2008), standardized interactional assessments (Zeanah & Boris, 2000) and combined videotaped mother-child interactions and interviews such as employed in Circle of Security (Hoffman, Marvin, Cooper, & Powell, 2006; Marvin, Cooper, Hoffman, & Powell, 2002).

The situation is further complicated by the fact that indications of disorganized attachment can be subtle and are not exhibited under all observational conditions. Disorganized behavior was first identified in the standardized Strange Situation procedure. As we noted earlier, even the behaviors of secure and insecure children can differ depending on the context. A parent-child relationship that appears to be positive, comfortable, or affectionate when no threat exists may be mislabeled as "a secure attachment." An evaluator must observe child and parent in conditions that activate the attachment system. Attachment is activated when the child is presented with the unexpected separation from the caregiver or experiences a threat to their security that should cause some level of distress. In situations where the caregiver has been absent or when relationship stress is high, most children (even avoidant children) will seek the

proximity of the caregiver to alleviate distress on the parent's return. Once comforted, they can resume more independent exploration. An evaluator must be attuned to how a child balances attempts to gain proximity to the caretaker or reduction in distress and the ability to engage in autonomous activities once equilibrium has been reestablished (Ainsworth et al., 1978; Waters & Deane, 1985).

Pathways to Disorganized Attachments Within the Divorce Context

In the context of a difficult divorce, an evaluator must differentiate situational, transitory distress and maladaptive behaviors related to the divorce and its sequelae from more long-standing concerns. This is particularly challenging because what might appear to be "typical, expected" reactions associated with divorce can become a foundation for the development of a disorganized attachment relationship. Among the questions an evaluator must ask are:

- Is the child's behavior a reaction to immediate situational overload or does it reflect more deeply established problems arising from the prolonged and damaging divorce process?
 - Is there a likely or verifiable history of disorganized attachment risk factors pre-dating the divorce that reflect the parent's own unresolved trauma or experiences of failed protection in his or her family of origin?
 - Is there a likely or verifiable history of risk factors for disorganization pre-dating the divorce in the present family, such as child abuse, domestic violence or high marital conflict?
 - Has the process of divorce itself resulted in such an interference with parenting capacity that a child who may previously have experienced an organized attachment relationship is now showing signs of disorganization?
- And finally,
- What is the impact of the intensive scrutiny of the evaluation process itself?

To summarize, we are evaluating a population that is likely to have a higher percentage of children with disorganized attachments or exhibit more disorganized attachment behaviors than normative populations given the factors that load into high-conflict divorce, including risk for family violence and child abuse, ongoing conflict, substance abuse and mental disorders. We are evaluating families within a process that is destabilizing for all families and especially destabilizing in high-risk situations. Finally, situational or evaluation specific behaviors must be differentiated from more enduring concerns and parental liabilities. It is important to keep in mind that young children are more vulnerable to the effects of disorganization in their immediate environment and diminished availability of their parents (Busch & Lieberman, 2005).

ASSESSING DISORGANIZED ATTACHMENT BEHAVIOR IN CHILD CUSTODY EVALUATIONS

How Children Are Affected

Attachment is a dyadic construct (Ainsworth et al., 1978); that is, the attachment relationship with one parent is defined by the child's experience with that parent and may be qualitatively different than the child's experience with the other parent. Especially when evaluating families with young children (infant to age five), a child's unique attachment relationship with each parent must be systematically evaluated. Recommendations for physical custody should support the child's attachment security or at least the best organized attachment system that addresses the child's needs. Failure to structure custody recommendations with these considerations in mind can place the child at risk for developmental disruptions in the short-term (e.g., compromised peer relations and school functioning) or long-term (e.g., selection of ill-suited partners in adult relationships).

CLINICAL EXAMPLE: SHORT-TERM REGRESSION OR ENDURING PATTERN OF DISORGANIZED ATTACHMENT?

We offer the following example of how a custody evaluator can apply constructs of attachment theory and specifically of the indices of disorganized attachment to shed light on significant features of some of our most difficult custody cases.

Sarah is a three-year-old child whose parents divorced when she was two. Her mother was her primary caregiver during the marriage. Each parent alleged that the other parent was violent during the marriage. The mother reported a history of domestic violence victimization in prior relationships. The mother believed that Sarah was being abused by the father. When this family had been previously evaluated, the child was described as experiencing "separation anxiety," based on the evaluator's observations of Sarah's distress and visible anxiety during parental exchanges. Mental health interventions, including coaching the parents for the exchanges and advising them how to comfort the child post-transfer, had not resolved the child's distress. The transition between households continued to be distressing. During the updated evaluation, when Sarah was brought back to her mother following overnight visitation with her father, she became visibly upset, throwing herself on the ground, sucking on her pacifier, screaming for her mother but then squirming away when her mother tried to comfort her. Sarah's mother continued to believe that she was being abused at the father's home.

This scenario led to several hypotheses. One was that Sarah was reacting to the inter-parental tension during these exchanges to the degree that there was a temporary deterioration in her otherwise organized/normal

functioning. Another was that Sarah was being abused in her father's home. If not abuse, she was perhaps having a very hard time with her father and being away from her mother. Following this hypothesis, Sarah might have been capable of managing her feelings while at her father's but was expressing pent-up tension and distress in the safety of her mother's presence. Another hypothesis was that what was called "separation anxiety" by a previous evaluator might have been extreme enough to indicate a disorganized attachment relationship with her mother. If this were the case, then Sarah's behavior during the transfer could be understood as a manifestation of her difficulty reconnecting with her mother following the threat to her security caused by mother's absence, as well as her anxiety about the overnight visitation. These various possibilities had to be explored in a comprehensive and systematic custody evaluation or the resulting recommendations would not likely represent the child's best interest.

In this particular case, the first author, who was the new evaluator, weighed the following data. The mother had a history of significant loss and trauma in her own family of origin and previous marriage. Her psychological test results from the Rorschach (Exner, 1997, 2003) and the Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory-2 (MMPI-2) (Butcher, Dahlstrom, Graham, Tellegen, & Kaemmer, 1989) indicated that she was overwhelmed with stress and that she tried to avoid emotionally provocative situations, but her thinking became illogical when she was unable to do so. Additionally, the mother saw the world as dangerous and utilized denial, intellectualization and dissociation as her primary defenses. This information suggested that the mother might have had considerable difficulty being consistently sensitive and responsive to Sarah's needs, which would have been exacerbated during the stressful transition between homes. However, the most striking data came from observing child-mother reunions during the transitions, both in a live observation and via reviews of video tapes the mother had made of previous reunions. Prior to the live observation, the evaluator picked the child up at the father's home and brought her to the mother's home. Upon reunion, the mother appeared helpless and haphazardly tried to re-engage through rapid successions of soothing, ignoring and intrusive behavior that appeared to have little to do with the Sarah's cues. There were many examples in the videotapes of the child running towards the mother and flinging herself on the ground overcome with distress, the child clinging to her mother while pushing her away and times when she seemed to zone out. All of these behaviors would have been coded as "disorganized" if they had occurred during a formal Strange Situation assessment. The evaluator also noted that on occasions when Sarah reunited with her father, their interactions were warm. Sarah did not evidence any behavior suggesting disorganization, and her father was authoritative and structured (i.e., not helpless) in his parenting. Furthermore, the father's test results did not suggest excessive and disorganizing anger or problems with emotional or behavioral controls. This amalgam of data led to the eventual

conclusion that the evaluator was witnessing a significant risk for Sarah's attachment to her mother to be disorganized.

IMPLICATIONS FOR CHILD CUSTODY PROCEDURE

Given the challenges outlined above, alterations or augmentation of typical data collecting procedures are in order when it is possible or likely that disorganized attachment is present.

IS DISORGANIZED ATTACHMENT BEHAVIOR PRESENT?

The child custody evaluator may well have heard reports of extreme behavior on the part of the infant or young child. The reports from the two parents may be and often are different. A few principles should be kept in mind. Attachment behavior is typically activated during stressful interactions such as separation from and subsequent re-introduction to the parent. At these times, the child's attachment system has been aroused and the child should be seeking some form of re-integration with that parent, including seeking reassurance and comfort, particularly when the separation has been lengthy or distressing. The child custody evaluator should be careful to assess whether problematic behavior, such as irritability, crying inconsolably, or hostile aggression and extremely conflict-laden interactions, is a reaction to disruption in routine or change in familiar setting (typical artifacts of divorce), or whether it is the hallmark of a troublesome specific parent-child relationship. Careful and detailed questioning regarding antecedent activities and behaviors is critical.

The custody evaluator must also realize that the disorganized attachment behavior can occur suddenly and may not last very long, such as when a child's approach to the parent is abruptly interrupted by her intense anger or fear. An evaluator may be tempted to discount such behavior as fleeting or unimportant, but researchers have demonstrated that the length of time a behavior endures is not relevant to the presence or absence of disorganization (Main & Solomon, 1990). Disorganization is evidenced by the lack or interruption of a systematic or "organized" approach to the parent in these contexts. As such, custody evaluators must observe interactions very carefully, noting shifts in the child's affects and behavior that appear suddenly or out of context. Identification of behavior associated with disorganization in naturalistic settings can be crucial to the evaluation of disorganized attachment behavior.

The Importance of Systematic Information Gathering and Data Collection from Multiple Sources

Because disorganized behavior may be a manifestation of the distress of a few particular situations and not indicative of the relationship at large, it is

important to systematically observe and make records (i.e., data) of these observations. We suggest alterations of the standard procedures in typical custody evaluations.

Since *parent-child observations* form the core of understanding attachment behavior, the evaluator may have to schedule more observation sessions than is typical and those sessions should be longer. For example, we agree with Schmidt, Cutress, Lang, Lewandowski, and Rawana (2007) that parent-child observations should likely be at least 90 minutes, again to accomplish a more comprehensive view of parent-child interactions. Naturalistic observations should take place during times when a child's level of anxiety is likely to be aroused, and when comforting and caretaking are naturally sought. This is especially important to keep in mind when observing children between the ages of three and five years because their daily lives are not necessarily as stressful as those of infants and toddlers. Thus, home visits are best done during times when a parent must engage in direct and directed caretaking, such as during feeding, or when a child awakens from a nap, or when the child must clean up after play, or even at bedtime. If a child is known to have difficulty with a particular daily routine, such as bedtime preparation or feeding, it is wise to structure a home visit around that activity. During an evaluation, one author did a visit at midnight when the child typically awoke for a brief period. This observation allowed the evaluator to assess the parent's ability to soothe the child. In addition, observations must certainly take place during transitions between parents. For young children experiencing difficulties at these times, the evaluator should observe the exchanges between parents in both directions, including the half hour before and after each transition.

Especially during home visits, the evaluator should be alert for unexpected events that cause the child distress. These unplanned "stress tests" allow an opportunity for careful observation of both the parent and child. These might include a parent becoming nonplussed by a child exhibiting a behavior that the parent fears will reflect poorly on them.

The evaluator may also want to do a structured assessment. During office visits, for example, arrange for the parent to leave the office a sufficient length of time and then carefully observe the reunion, including the child's subsequent ability to resume play. Observe what actions the parent takes in terms of reengaging with and comforting the child, and the child's reactions to these interventions. For children five years and older, the separation should be at least 30 minutes. Observation of the reunion and return to play should be for a similar amount of time to see if the child can sustain focus and connection.

Reports from neutral third parties are particularly important in these cases. As in all custody evaluations, reports from family members and friends do not offer impartial views of parent-child interactions. Objective reports are much more likely to come from neutral individuals and especially from

professionals who have worked with the family. Push third parties to offer direct observation and description of the child's behavior. Most people who are invested in a child will have an opinion of what behavior means. Interpretation of behavior is the job of the evaluator. The data is in the descriptions, not in the interpretations. Mental health and medical professionals, as well as other individuals who are experienced in the behavior of young children and in parent-child observations can be especially valuable sources of information. Reports from teachers and childcare workers may be more problematic, as a child's behavior in these settings is not always indicative or representative of behavior with a parent. Children who control and bind anxiety through caregiving of the adult are often described in positive terms, though they have not developed an adaptive way of being cared for themselves. Still, it will be the task of the custody evaluator to integrate this information with the rest of the data obtained in the assessment.

In many cases undergoing evaluation, a parent is ordered to have supervised visitation and/or supervised transitions. The supervisor can be an invaluable source of information, as many are skilled at making careful behavioral observations and it is routine for them to write up notes for each contact with the family.

Especially in instances which involve infants or pre-school children, and in which disorganized behavior has been reported or observed, very careful *history taking* can offer insights into the emotional template parents are apt to apply. These will include listening carefully for coherency and paying close attention to suggestions that the parent feels helpless in the caretaking role. The custody evaluator should be especially alert to the possibility that distressing material may arise and disorganize the parent during the interview. The skilled interviewer can probe to determine the extent to which the parent applies agency in problematic situations. That is, to what extent does the parent have the capacity to think through or take actions to insure her own or her child's security?

Several *formal assessment procedures and instruments* developed for research can have applicability in the clinical setting. Evaluators who work frequently with the populations described are urged to consider training in one or more of these. For children, this would include the Strange Situation (Ainsworth et al., 1978) for infants and very young children or the Attachment Doll Play Assessment (Solomon et al., 1995) for ages 4 through 11.

Attachment status in adults is analogous to attachment status in children. Parents' adult attachment status reflects the adult's state of mind regarding his or her own attachment experience, especially with childhood attachment figures, and there are several assessment procedures for evaluating adult attachment. One is the Adult Attachment Interview (George et al., 1984/1985/1996; Hesse, 2008; Main & Goldwyn, 1984/1998), a systematic clinical style interview that guides the adult in describing memories of childhood attachment experiences and its effect on adult personality. Some

evaluators use portions or selected questions from the AAI in their interviews with parents. Another is the Adult Attachment Projective Picture System (AAP) (George & West, 2001, in press). This assessment provides systematic information about an adult's views of self and other in attachment relationships based on responses to attachment picture stimuli, without information about the past. Personal characteristics such as defensiveness, agency of self, effective problem-solving capabilities, and connection to others in relationships are also assessed.

It is also important for custody evaluators to recognize that children have *different attachment relationships* to different caregivers and to evaluate those relationships independently. Thus, while gathering history about the child's temperament and general behavioral patterns is important, it is critical to look closely at situation-specific behavior. Custody evaluators should be prepared to describe how the child reacts and behaves with each caregiver and in different kinds of situations. Focus should be placed on situations where the child experiences distress and seeks protective or reassuring caregiving. As best as possible, observed interactions between the child and the different caregivers should be parallel or comparable.

RISK AND PROTECTIVE FACTORS

As we have stated, disorganization is not a trait in the child. Disorganization appears to develop when specific relationship and contextual stressors are present (Lyons-Ruth & Jacobvitz, 2008). Further, any specific form of attachment is best viewed as a buffer or risk factor to development that increases or decreases the probability of developmental risk (Sroufe et al., 2005). With this in mind, we suggest that using the lens of risk and protective factors may assist child custody evaluators to gauge levels of vulnerability and prognosis and help to focus interviews and observations.

Parent Risk and Protective Factors

PREVIOUS UNRESOLVED TRAUMA

Sound history-taking should explore thoroughly prior trauma and the parent's relative resolution of traumatic experiences. Such trauma may include: a parent having been the victim of abuse (physical, emotional or sexual); having witnessed domestic violence; having been the victim of a violent crime; having witnessed a traumatic event; having had severe prior medical problems or injuries; having had the sudden or untoward loss of a significant other, particularly an early caretaker. The custody evaluator should examine closely how the parent coped with the loss or trauma, the possible presence of post-traumatic stress, and the adaptability of the parent. In such cases, a comprehensive assessment is indicated, including data from multiple sources

such as collateral informants and psychological testing. This is also an area in which the AAI or the AAP can be extremely helpful.

EMOTIONAL RESILIENCY

The custody evaluator should assess for the general emotional resiliency and adaptability of the parent via observation and interview. Those parents who are better able to adapt and integrate prior experiences are less vulnerable to emotional dysregulation and disorganization. They are also likely to be better able to buffer their children from the emotional impact of events that are upsetting to them and hence be more present emotionally when their children are in need of caretaking. Again, multiple sources of data should be utilized.

PARENTING STYLE

Through interviewing and observation, it may be possible to characterize the parenting style of each parent. Although not isomorphic in concept with secure attachment, the authoritative style, characterized by co-construction of activities and communication, and emotional attunement, embodies many of the principles that promote security (Hetherington & Kelly, 2002). In contrast, the authoritarian style, which is characterized by rigid restrictions and emotional distance, effects compliance in the child but also can generate fear, insecurity and constriction. And a laissez-faire style, lacking adequate structure and parental guidance, promotes dependency and failures in children's agency. In the context of a child custody evaluation, it is always important to maintain awareness of image management, so that the professed parenting style reported by a mother or father actually comports with the observed parent and child interactions.

DISSOCIATION TENDENCIES

Propensity toward dissociative experiences or prior instances of dissociation raises significant questions about parental stability and capacity to be present and attentive to a young child's needs. Sudden and extreme emotional withdrawal is frightening to an infant and over time can result in the child being overwhelmed emotionally when the attachment system is activated. The child custody evaluator can augment careful interviewing with a variety of psychological tests, such as the Dissociative Experiences Scale or DES-II (Carlson & Putnam, 2000), the MMPI-2, and the Rorschach Trauma Content Index (Kaser-Boyd, 2008). While this data will not offer definitive evidence of dissociation in parent-child interactions, they may suggest that a parent is especially vulnerable to disruption in attentiveness and attunement.

SUBSTANCE USE AND ABUSE

Parents who engage in excessive use or abuse of controlled substances are at risk for the kinds of unpredictable and inattentive behaviors that can contribute to the development of attachment disorganization. Using alcohol or drugs in the presence of the child limits the parent's capacity to recognize and address the child's immediate needs, and may cause frightening parent behavior. In addition, parents with substance abuse problems are prone to serious lapses of impulse control and engaging in excessive focus on gratifying their immediate needs, even if they are not using to excess in the presence of their child. When this issue arises in child custody evaluations, random drug screening or referral to a substance abuse expert, in addition to a careful review of any police reports, may be indicated.

EXTENT OF PARENT SUPPORT SYSTEMS

Those parents who have limited support systems have few resources on which to rely during stressful periods. They get little respite from their problems and may also lose perspective on their lives. Supports can include not only family members and friends, but community-based agencies and assistance. The evaluator should probe for the parent's attitudes towards available supports. For example, to what extent is the parent willing to use a support? To what extent does he or she find the services helpful?

Child Risk and Protective Factors

TEMPERAMENT

Though a child's temperament does not specifically predict attachment disorganization, more difficult and less resilient temperaments put children at greater risk to experience the untoward effects of abrupt disruptions in caretaker availability and effectiveness (Vaughn et al., 2008). Such problematic temperament profiles are seen in infants and young children who have a low sensory threshold, do not regulate themselves well, are less generally adaptable, are more distractible, and are more intense and more prone to shifts in mood.

PRIOR HISTORY OF TRAUMA

Children who have been the victims of or who have witnessed traumatic events may be more prone to general emotional disorganization. Extreme emotional unavailability of the caretaker and/or fear-inducing behavior could be especially problematic for these children, as post-traumatic responses are re-activated.

ENVIRONMENTAL AND SYSTEMIC FACTORS

The quality and availability of other attachment figures is important in buffering children who may be disorganized with a parent. It is possible that the presence of more organized and secure attachment relationships with other attachment figures may mitigate the effects of disorganized attachment, since disorganized attachment is specific to a particular parent-child dyad. Other caretakers, such as the other parent, grandparents or new partners may provide protection for the young child, and venues for learning more organized attachment strategies. The child custody evaluator should be careful to interview other caretakers and sometimes even observe the child with these other individuals, to evaluate the resiliency of the child and the other resources available to him/her.

Johnston and Campbell have written extensively about how conflict between divorcing parents can expand to include other family members (Johnston & Campbell, 1988). In turn, such "tribal warfare" exacerbates existing tensions between the parents, as it often adds fuel to the fire and reduces venues for reconciliation or at least softening of the tensions. We suggest that when a broader core of family members is steeped in the divorce tension and dynamics, focus is taken away further from the child, and the overall family atmosphere becomes more tense. This sets the stage for more emotional dyscontrol and less buffering of the child from the fears and frightening behavior of the caretaker.

THE FAMILY'S SOCIOECONOMIC FACTORS

Parents are faced with additional strains and pressures to address their own day-to-day needs and those of their children when resources are scarce. In attachment disorganization, the parent experiences difficulty adapting and coping in the moment, and the responsibilities of parenting can further induce fear and apprehension. The caretaker's adaptive skills are taxed even more, making personal resiliency difficult when resources are in short supply. Custody evaluators should not underestimate how important this is to caretakers' daily functioning.

CUSTODY RECOMMENDATIONS

Identifying disorganized attachment is much more than applying a descriptive label. When substantial and persistent signs of disorganization are present, young children are likely to experience a deep level of disturbance and parents' caretaking abilities will be compromised. This affects the scope and specificity of recommendations made to the Court. Thoughtful changes in the caretaking relationships must be made as soon as possible to alter this developmental trajectory and frequently mental health interventions are also needed.

Under these circumstances, we suggest that child custody evaluators take the following factors into consideration. (1) Recommendations should include not only timeshare schedules, but therapeutic interventions aimed at altering the course of the parent-child relationships in a healthier direction. (2) There are times when a change in primary custody may appear to be a drastically jarring or disruptive move for a child. However, the short-term disruption may prove to be a better alternative than the status quo. (3) The evaluator must thoroughly assess all of the attachment relationships in the family landscape, understanding that they may be very different. A more secure attachment to a less involved caretaker may have an ameliorating affect on the child. (4) Recommendations for therapeutic interventions with the caretaker are essential. Referrals should be made to professionals who are skilled at working with individuals who have experienced unresolved loss and trauma. In such situations, parents need much more than "supportive therapy", as the psychological work involved is often difficult and on treacherous terrain.

In general, recommendations should not be open-ended. People can change and can learn to live better with past loss and distress. They can also learn how to buffer their children from their own wounds and upsets. Evidence of disorganized attachment does not point to a developmental course that is set in stone. Evaluators should consider recommending re-evaluation based on several factors including the relative strengths of the parent, the parent's openness to intervention, the resiliency of the child and the child's developmental stage.

Evaluators should further consider augmenting recommendations of psychotherapy with education and directed parent-child interventions. In cases of disorganized attachment, parents may need to learn behavioral techniques for containing their anxiety in the moment, as well as ways to recognize cues from their infants and toddlers, and specific techniques for coping with the child's problematic behavior. Interventions such as the Circle of Security (Hoffman et al., 2006) have been developed specifically to educate parents about attachment and teach parents to recognize their babies' cues, the difficulties with their own responses and how to respond in more sensitive and effective ways.

JUDGES' PERCEPTIONS OF CHILDREN'S NEEDS

Public policy as reflected in the law often lags behind social science research and can reflect simplification of the multiple factors that should be considered in attempting to understand a child's needs. The shift from seeing children as merely the property of the father to the legal concept of the "tender years' doctrine" represented an instance of public policy finally reflecting the awareness of the child's psychological need to have his/her attachment to

the mother supported, at least until school age. A later shift or refinement in public policy reflected the research and psychological theory at that time, which posited the existence and importance of a primary psychological parent or attachment figure, most often the mother. This shift reflected the influence of Anna Freud, John Bowlby and Mary Ainsworth and the growing awareness that parent-child relationships were critical for a child's development.

We have noted that almost all of the early work in attachment involved observations and codifying of mother-child observations but did not include father-child observation. While there has been evolving emphasis on fathers' involvement with their children (Lamb, 1997; Pruett, 2000), as well as focus on the fact that children typically have multiple attachments and hierarchies of attachment, much of this knowledge has been slow to filter into the courts. Similarly, research on attachment disorganization is getting increasing attention in clinical areas. There is a need to educate courts, through our child custody evaluations, to look at this spectrum of parent-child relations and consider the possibility that just because a child "seems" closer or more reliant on one parent, it might not be best for the child to be placed primarily with that parent. Frequently, the court still looks at children's needs through the lens of tender years doctrine (all little ones should be with their mothers). There is still a trend toward identifying a "primary parent," which too often is defined as the parent with whom the child spends the most time. The label of "primary parent" is now becoming, inaccurately, "primary attachment figure." However, this term is too often assigned to the parent to whom the child "seems" to be more connected and with whom they have a superficially easier relationship. In these instances, recommendations may be made without careful consideration of the nature of true attachment behavior. This is a path fraught with difficulty. It is our opinion that examining a child's attachment relationship with each parent and looking at each parent's caregiving representation and adult attachment status must augment traditional methods of evaluating a child in order to develop parenting plans that support healthier attachment relationships and suggest interventions that will remediate problems. It is hoped that at some point in the future, the need to incorporate attachment research into public policy will be realized.

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