

PE1790/H

Petitioner submission of 12 March 2020

Symptoms and Behaviours of Parental Alienators

Eight Symptoms of Parental Alienation

1. Campaign of denigration (the child is turned against the other parent by bad mouthing, criticism, negative comments regarding the other parent; the child is put in a position where they feel that they must choose between their parents and the child must choose a side in order to get out of being put in the middle)
2. Weak, frivolous, or absurd rationalizations for the deprecation (the child's reason for suddenly not wanting contact with the other parent is trivial, such as they have to eat healthy food, clean their room, etc.)
3. Lack of ambivalence (normally, a child is ambivalent toward their parents, when alienated the child views one parent as all good and the other as all bad)
4. The "independent thinker" phenomenon (the child comes to believe that their opinions about the other parent are their own beliefs and not that of the Alienating Parent; that they were not coached, told what to say, etc.)
5. Reflexive support of the alienating parent in the parental conflict (the child takes the side of the alienating parent in all cases and argues in their support and never defends or sides with the Targeted Parent)
6. Absence of guilt over cruelty to and/or exploitation of the alienated parent (the child has no empathy or compassion toward the target parent)
7. Presence of borrowed scenarios (child makes up stories and incidents where the targeted parent is the villain)
8. Spread of the animosity to the friends and/or extended family of the alienated parent (not only is the child alienated from the target parent, but also from that parent's extended family – grandparents, aunts, uncles, etc.)

The eight symptoms of Parental Alienation were originally constructed by Dr. Richard A. Gardner and have been reported, discussed and corroborated by a number of experts in the field including Amy J.L. Baker, Ph.D., Robert A. Evans, Ph.D., J. Michael Bone, Ph.D., and Douglas C. Darnall, Ph.D.

The Seventeen Behaviours of Alienating Parents

1. Badmouthing the other parent
2. Limiting Contact between the child and the other parent
3. Interfering with communication between the child and the other parent

4. Interfering with symbolic communication (no pictures or mention of the other parent in favoured parent home)
5. Withdrawal of love and approval
6. Telling the child that the other parent does not love him or her
7. Forcing the child to choose between parents
8. Telling the child that the other parent is dangerous
9. Confiding in the child
10. Forcing the child to reject the other parent
11. Asking the child to spy on the other parent
12. Ask child to keep secrets from the other parent
13. Referring to the other parent by his or her first name and encouraging the child to do the same
14. Referring to a stepparent/new significant other as “mom” or “dad” and encouraging the child to do the same
15. Withholding medical, academic, or other important information from the other parent and not including that parent’s contact information on relevant documents
16. Changing the child’s name to eliminate the association with the other parent
17. Undermining the authority of the target (other) parent and cultivating dependency on the favoured parent

Amy J.L. Baker, Ph.D., discusses the 17 Parental Alienation strategies and how to respond to them in her article “Beyond the High Road”.