



# 17 Signs of Parental Alienation



**Victim To Warrior**  
Method



# Introduction

Each of the following signs involve the alienating parent influencing the child to perceive reality and the targeted parent in a negative light, regardless of whether the targeted parent exhibits any problematic behaviors. This can be extremely distressing for the targeted parent, whose relationship with their child changes dramatically after separation. Thus, it is important to know what steps you can take to address the following signs

# Signs by the Child

- Expressing disapproval towards the targeted parent
- Justifying their own hostile actions
- Hostility toward the targeted parent's relatives
- Adopting the opinions of the alienating parent as their own
- Impervious to feelings of guilt
- Thinking that their own rejection of the targeted parent is their own decision
- Idealized perspective of the alienating parent

# Signs by the Alienating Parent

- Badmouthing the targeted parent
- Withholding medical, academic, and other important information
- Referring to the targeted parent by first name instead of "mum" or "dad"
- Confiding in the child
- Telling the child that the targeted parent does not love him or her
- Forcing the child to choose
- Telling the child that the targeted parent is dangerous
- Withdrawal of love
- Interfering with communication
- Limiting contact

# The Child's Behavior

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## **Expressing disapproval towards the targeted parent:**

The child makes criticisms of the targeted parent that reflect statements made to them by the alienating parent, in an attempt to become the favored parent. Children who are severely alienated from the targeted parent deny all positive past experiences and focus on making statements to the parent that demeans and denigrates them.

## **Justifying their own hostile actions**

The child has weak or absurd rationalizations for why they are hostile to the targeted parent. These rationalizations are not of significant enough magnitude to warrant rejection of the targeted parent, including a focus on hatred of trivial acts. For example, the child may blame their negative feelings on the way the parent prepares their food. The reason provided by the child ultimately does not explain their level of hostility.



**Hostility toward the targeted parent's relatives:**

The child's behavior toward the targeted parent extends to the targeted parent's family. Formerly beloved family members, like a step-parent, aunts, grandparents and cousins are also rejected by the child.

**Adopting the opinions of the alienating parent as their own:**

The child talks like and makes accusations using language reflecting that of the alienating parent. The words used by the child in this instance are words 'too old' for them, including words they likely do not understand.

**Impervious to feelings of guilt:**

The child is rude and ungrateful towards the targeted parent, and they exhibit language demanding things from the parent and appear impervious to feelings of guilt about their actions.

**Thinking that their own rejection of the targeted parent is their own decision:**

The child believes and explains that their rejection of the targeted parent is from their own independent thoughts and experiences, and that it has nothing to do with the alienating parent's conduct.

**Idealized perspective of the alienating parent:**

The child sees the alienating parent as wholly good or perfect and the targeted parent as wholly bad or imperfect. Their perception of the alienating parent is automatic and idealized.

# The Alienating Parent's Behavior

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**Badmouthing the targeted parent:**

The alienating parent consistently speaks to the child about their hatred or disdain of the targeted parent and tells the child that the parent is a bad person or parent.

**Withholding medical, academic, and other important information:**

The alienating parent refuses to confide in or consult the targeted parent regarding important information and decisions to do with the child. It can also involve asking the child to keep secrets from the targeted parent.

### **Referring to the targeted parent by their first name instead of “Mom” or “Dad”:**

The alienating parent stops referring to the targeted parent as mom or dad, and by using more formal language, further alienates the child from feeling a close personal bond with the targeted parent.

### **Confiding in the child:**

The alienating parent tells the child of what is occurring in the separation, including that of any legal proceedings.

### **Telling the child that the targeted parent does not love him or her:**

The alienating parent consistently reminds the child that the targeted parent does not care for or love them anymore.



**Forcing the child to choose:**

The alienating parent will force the child to choose between the two parents, and will often offer more 'attractive' activities in time that is meant to be for the targeted parent to sway the child away from them.

**Telling the child that the targeted parent is dangerous:**

The alienating parent will tell the child that the targeted parent is not safe to be around, and that they cannot protect the child from harm.



**Withdrawal of love:**

The alienating parent will withhold their love and affection for the child unless the child outwardly rejects the targeted parent.

**Interfering with communication:**

The alienating parent will interrupt calls or videocalls between the child and targeted parent (for example take the phone and hang up early), or cease facilitating the communications entirely.

**Limiting contact:**

The alienating parent will make excuses and reduce the time the targeted parent spends with the child.

# What to do if you are experiencing parental alienation

While there is no failsafe answer in trying to respond to and mitigate the impact of parental alienation, a targeted parent can take steps to maintain their relationship with the child by continuing to listen to the child, allowing the child to speak their mind, and consistently making time to play with and engage with the child.

Therapy can also help, seeing mental health professionals like a psychologist can help you to manage the situation and ultimately take care of yourself. In circumstances where taking these steps fails to prevent parental alienation from occurring, legal steps should be taken by the targeted parent to address their concerns more firmly.

While the law recognizes that it can be in the best interests of the child to maintain a relationship with both parents, and in fact currently presumes this, it does not infallibly always make orders for this. Ultimately, in circumstances where the child is being hurt by the conduct of one or both of their parents, it may be decided that it is not in their best interests to maintain a relationship with both parents.

## Seeking legal advice

If you are experiencing parental alienation and your former partner or spouse is withholding your child for no justifiable reason, it is important to get legal advice on the next steps to take. Mediation and family dispute resolution is also another tool that can be utilized to assist parties with learning about and managing parental alienation.



**Melissa Rymer**  
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**Book a Call**