

Family Law Seminar

Managing Cases of Children Resistant to Parental Contact & Alienated Children – International & UK Experiences

17:00 – 19:00, Wednesday 27 June 2012
Central London

You are invited to attend this family law seminar which is being kindly sponsored by
Andrew Selous MP.

Welcome - Andrew Selous MP

*Member of Parliament for South West Bedfordshire Parliamentary Private Secretary to the Rt Hon
Iain Duncan Smith MP Secretary of State for Work and Pensions*

Chair - The Hon Mr Justice Coleridge

Royal Courts of Justice, London, UK

Speakers

Professor Nicholas Bala

Faculty of Law, Queen's University, Kingston, Ontario, Canada

Dr Mark Berelowitz

Consultant Child and Adolescent Psychiatrist, Royal Free Hospital, London, UK

Mrs Karen Woodall

Family Counsellor and Director of the Centre for Separated Families, London, UK

This is a free event by invitation only and places are limited.

**To ensure a place is reserved for you please RSVP by email to the seminar organisers
by **Thursday 21 June 2012** at familylawseminar@virginmedia.com**

Venue details will be provided with invitation confirmation

Background to the seminar

Over the last few years the family law landscape has positively changed and moved forward in recognising and attempting to address cases where children drawn into conflict following parental separation and divorce exhibit resistance to spending time with one of their parents.

As stated by His Honour Judge Clifford Bellamy in his [public case judgement of 11 August 2010](#) (CASE No. NU10C00043):

"1 The concept of alienation as a feature of some high conflict parental disputes may today be regarded as mainstream.

2 There is no professional or expert consensus as to the approach the court should take with an alienated child. The solutions tried in this case had failed. The case demonstrated that there could be no 'one-size-fits-all' solution.

3 Alienation will only be a feature in a small number of cases and may be outwith the experience of

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the care professionals. In cases involving an alienated child it is "essential that the court has the benefit of professional evidence from an expert who has personal experience of working with alienated children."

A multidisciplinary approach is therefore needed to achieve effective early intervention to avoid the entrenchment of parental positions and prevent child arrangements breaking down which leads to huge difficulties in trying to restore and repair relationships between affected children and the excluded parent and extended family, including grandparents.

This seminar provides an important platform for leading judicial, legal and clinical experts in this field to discuss these issues and to consider how best to develop new ways of resolving such intractable cases to better protect affected children and ensure they are able to have a continuing relationship with both of their parents following family breakdown.

We look forward to welcoming you to this seminar.

This event has been developed through collaboration of key legal and clinical professionals working within the family law field and UK parenting and grandparenting charities including [The Centre for Separated Families](#), [Families Need Fathers \(FNF\)](#), [The Grandparents Association](#), [Mothers Apart from Their Children \(MATCH\)](#) and [Jewish Unity for Multiple Parenting \(JUMP\)](#).

About the Chair



The Hon. Mr Justice Coleridge

Royal Courts of Justice, London, UK

Paul Coleridge was appointed a High Court Judge in 2000, after 30 years as a family law specialist barrister. He was assigned to the Family Division, dealing with all the most complex cases involving problems which arise when families break up. He deals with issues concerning the children in particular. He was the Family Division Liaison Judge for the Western Circuit from 2002-2011, where he held special responsibility for all the family courts from Hampshire to Cornwall.

About the Speakers



Professor Nicholas Bala, L.S.M., B.A. (Toronto), LL.B. (Queen's), LL.M. (Harvard)

Faculty of Law at Queen's University, Kingston, Ontario, Canada

Nicholas Bala is a Professor at Queen's University, specialising in family and children's law. Much of his research is interdisciplinary, as he collaborates with mental health professionals and social scientists to learn about the effects of involvement in the justice system on children and parents. He has written or co-authored 16 books and over 125 book chapters and articles on such topics as post-separation parenting, domestic violence, juvenile justice and child witnesses. His work is often cited by all levels of court in Canada, including the Supreme Court of Canada. He is frequently invited to present to audiences of judges, lawyers, psychologists and social workers in Canada, as well as to professional and academic audiences in a number of countries, including the United States, UK, Italy, Australia and Hong Kong.

He has recently published articles on alienation in parental separation cases,^{1,2} and he is currently co-authoring a study for Canada's Department of Justice on legal and social responses to cases

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where children are resisting contact with a parent. He is also presently undertaking a project with a social work professor on judicial interviews of children in divorce cases.

His recent achievements include Winner of the Association of Family & Conciliation Courts Distinguished Research Award, 2008, Ontario Bar Association Award for Excellence in Family Law, 2009 and the Law Society Medal, 2009.

¹Fidler BJ, Bala N. Children Resisting Postseparation Contact With A Parent: Concepts, Controversies, And Conundrums. *Family Court Review* 2010;48:10-47.

²Bala N, Hunt S, McCarney C. Parental Alienation: Canadian Court Cases 1989–2008. *Family Court Review* 2010;48:164-179.



Dr Mark Berelowitz

Consultant Child and Adolescent Psychiatrist, Royal Free Hospital, London, UK

Mark Berelowitz is a Consultant Child and Adolescent Psychiatrist at the Royal Free Hospital, London. He has been involved in many cases in which children are struggling with their relationship with a parent, post divorce.

Dr Berelowitz also sees parents who are contemplating divorce, for advice about how to reduce the risks and consequences for their children.



Mrs Karen Woodall

Family Counsellor and Director of the Centre for Separated Families, London

Karen Woodall is a family counsellor who has worked with vulnerable children and their families since 1991. She is currently the Director of the Centre for Separated Families, a charity working with everyone affected by family separation.

Karen is committed to the development of family services in the UK that meet the diverse needs of separated families. She is the author of several publications on children and families and has written for the Joseph Rowntree Foundation on separated parents and isolation and for Oxfam on Gender Analysis. Most recently, she co-authored *The Guide for Separated Parents* with her husband Nick Woodall.

Karen was appointed as a Family Commissioner in 2009, working to explore the big issues surrounding the extended family and the support it needs in the twenty first century. The Commission is led by 4Children and chaired by Esther Rantzen CBE.

Karen is currently working with high conflict families where children have rejected a parent.
