

Children's Best Interests and Conflict

There's a lot of talk about protection during a divorce or separation. Namely, one of these things that people talk about protecting is the best interests of the kids. A divorce between parents forces their children to involuntarily deal with this difficult situation; it's not just emotionally taxing on them, but it also threatens to change parts of their life such as where they live, where they attend school, which family members they spend time with, and much more. Issues that concern a child's best interests span nearly every aspect of their life, so it's no wonder why there's plenty of talk surrounding their interests and how to best serve them.

Parents try to protect what they each believe to be in their child's best interests, but disputes can quickly occur when there are disagreements as to what those best interests are and how best to uphold them. Depending on how fiercely they might disagree on a subject, parents may find themselves involved in costly disputes which lead them to court time and time again. Even though parents may have good intentions in mind as they fight for what they believe to be right for their kids, some might argue that this opposition as actually blocking a child's best interests from being truly served. "The greater the parental conflict, the more at risk the child is for poor outcomes," says social worker Gary Direnfeld. He explains how parents who can find peaceful solutions to resolve conflicts are better able to serve their child's best interests. "The best childhood memories start with peaceful parents," he says. "Now that's in the best interest of children."

Moreover, less time and energy spent in court to work out disputes leaves both parents with more time and energy to spend on the children.