



Living Conditions During the Pandemic for Children whose Parents are separated

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The International Council on Shared Parenting is concerned with promoting needs, growth, and well-being of children after parental break-up. Members of this INGO are from three sectors: science, family justice professionals and civil society. The purpose of the ICSP consists in disseminating knowledge on shared parenting and making appropriate recommendations to stakeholders, politicians, and professionals.

Recently, the ICSP conducted a survey in several European countries to better understand the living conditions during the pandemic for children whose parents are separated. Preliminary results from 12 countries are available in the paper linked to [webinar1](#).

During the COVID-19 crisis, single women with children were strongly impacted. On the other hand, single fathers were sometimes unable or not allowed to contact their children. All in all, many children whose parents are separated were put in difficult situations. These children are at a disadvantage compared to children whose separated parents are sharing parental responsibilities.

The ICSP survey showed that in many cases, separated parents have improved the way they contact their children. While some parents tried to use the lockdown to separate the child from the other parent, media and experts reported that many parents increased the length of time their children stay with each parent. These parents aim to improve their children's well-being, and share children's educational tasks and homework. They also want to reduce the inequalities between parents by making it easier for each of them to work at a distance.

Such efforts from parents could be supported by institutional bodies in three ways:

- 1- Paying special attention to vulnerable groups in times of health crisis (CEPEJ 2020-8rev). Children whose parents are separated need special attention to ensure their need and right to have regular relations with their parents. On the one hand, it is necessary to prevent the spread of viruses, but on the other hand, at the same level, it is necessary to preserve the development and well-being of children. Children must be able to move around in such a way that they have sufficient contact with their parents.
- 2- Developing parental leave and in particular father leave strengthen both the bounds between children and father and the parental responsibility of each parent. This is in line with the EU directive on work-life balance for parents, which aims to give women and men the right to play an equal role at home and in the workplace.
- 3- Reinforcing the development of shared parenting in the legislation and judicial practices of all European countries. This development should enable children to maintain relationships with their parents. This is in line with both the CRC (Article 9-3) and the PACE Resolution 2079 (2015).