

Background – Emily Case

Participants:

Dad: 22 yrs. old, father of the 2 children, not married to the mother

Mom: 20 yrs. old, mother of the 2 children, not married to the father

Emily: 1 yr. old

Molly: 3 yrs. old

Allegation Narrative:

4 weeks ago, the parents were exchanging the children for visitation and the dad hit the mom in the face with an open hand in front of the children. The dad was holding Emily and dropped her on the car seat to continue to hit the baby's mother. The baby was not physically harmed. Also, this past week, on a different occasion, the mom was holding Emily and the dad hit her in the face with his open hand. Again, this happened during a return of the children from dad to mom following a visitation with dad. Emily was reportedly not physically harmed. In both instances the other daughter, Molly, was present and witnessed the incidents but was not directly involved. The reporter alleges that "altercations" between mom and dad have been going on for the past 2 years.

Initial Investigation/Assessment Information:

Mom appears to be of average intelligence with no apparent disabilities or disturbances in physical, emotional or cognitive functioning. Mom supports herself through phone solicitation work from home and through income support benefits. The children's father also contributes money from time to time for the care of their children. She says that she loves her children and wants them to grow up in a loving family. She acknowledges the danger posed to her children when there are physical altercations between her and the children's father. However, she seems to minimize the potential emotional impact of domestic violence on her children. Since the children's father moved out of the apartment about three months ago, the physical incidents have only arisen during the transfer of the children associated with visitations. Mom is open to considering different strategies, but was not able to offer any concrete ideas of her own. Presently, she has custody of the children and any visitation arrangements are voluntary with no court involvement.

Mom admitted being hit by the children's father as alleged in the report. She did not have any noticeable bruising on her face, and she denied any other physical injuries resulting from domestic violence. She does state that she is scared that her children will be harmed if these confrontational incidents continue.

Both mom and dad have had the support of the children's paternal grandparents. This support has been appropriate, even handed and consistent, even when their son left the apartment and moved into his own trailer. For example, they readily talk to both parents and do not bad-mouth one to the other. If baby-sitting is needed, they try to be available. Both mom and dad say that they trust them. Mom is estranged

from her own parents and they live in another state. She has no other relatives in the state and she reports that she has some friends, but no one that she feels real close to. The PGP's both hope that the fighting and arguing will end, no matter whose fault it may be. They want what is best for their two grandchildren. Due to physical limitations, they reported that they do not have the capacity to provide full time care for the children, even if on a temporary basis. They are willing to consider assisting in other ways, if needed.

Dad has only been contacted by phone so far. His demeanor appeared to be mostly calm, but very aggravated when the mother of his children was mentioned. He believes that the children's mom is trying to get back at him by limiting his contact with them. He calls mom a b*tch and "an idiot". He states that he would never harm his children and that "he would be a better parent than that idiot." He reports that he works full time for a landscaping company. He says that he enjoys his children and wants to be with them more often, especially on weekends when his is not working. He reports that his relationship with his own parents is fine.