

**Appendix 9**  
**PARENTAL ALIENATION SYNDROME:**  
**A CHECKLIST**

Most children want contact with the secondary parent, but in some cases children may consistently refuse access. Some common reasons for refusing access include separation anxiety in younger children, boredom or anger about specific issues in school-age children, loyalty conflicts in pre-adolescents, or social/job-related factors in adolescents.

However, when a child has refused more than two or three contacts with the secondary parent and the refusals do not appear to be related to any of the above-mentioned factors, then attorneys should review the following questions with their clients to help determine if the child is exhibiting signs of parental alienation.

1. Does the child appear preoccupied with making negative comments or criticizing one parent unjustly to an exaggerate level?
2. Does the child appear to “hate” the parent and express this feeling without embarrassment or guilt?
3. Does the child have a black/white perspective (one parent being “wonderful,” the other being “hated”)?
4. Does the child express fear about the “hated” parent without specific events being related or relating events that would not normally result in the level of anxiety or fear?
5. Is the significant anger between the parents?
6. Does the child appear to display behaviors that would suggest an overly strong attachment to the favored parent?
7. Does the favored parent feel that the children would be “better off” not seeing the targeted parent?
8. Does the favored parent seem opposed to securing help in an attempt to improve the relationship with the targeted parent?
9. Does the favored parent have a history of need to control, sense of entitlement or history of manipulative or verbally abusive behavior?
10. Does the favored parent appear to want to hear favorable comments about the target parent from the child?

### *Creating Effective Parenting Plans*

11. Has the favored parent taken information to other family members as a way of enlisting support?
12. Does the favored parent make derogatory comments about the target parent's extended family members?
13. Do the views of the child appear "scripted" or does the child use language that is not age-appropriate in their description?
14. Does the child appear to possess adult (or unnecessary) information?
15. Have there been reoccurring reports to the Department of Human Services resulting in unfounded reports of abuse or neglect?

If the answers to a majority of these questions are "yes," then attorneys should recommend that their clients seek professional assistance from a family counselor or psychologist. Stopping alienation early on has the greatest likelihood of success. Once entrenched, it is a very difficult process to alter.