

PARENTAL ALIENATION FAQ

How do you know it is parental alienation—and not justified rejection?

In a case where a child rejects contact with a parent, an evaluator can determine if the rejection is unwarranted, which is called *parental alienation*, by making a thorough investigation of the empirical facts over time. If the child has a legitimate reason to reject a parent, it is called *estrangement*.

An evaluator can use the Five-Factor Model to identify and diagnose parental alienation. If the answer, after thorough and qualified investigation, to all five questions below is yes, it is most probably a case of severe parental alienation.

1. Does the child refuse contact?
2. Did the child before their refusal of contact have a loving relationship with the now-rejected parent?
3. Is there a lack of confirmed, reliable information about abuse or neglect from that parent?
4. Is there documentation over time that the other parent has used several of the 17 identified alienation strategies?
5. Does the child manifest the 8 characteristics for an alienated child?

Lorandos, D., Bernet, W. (2020). *Parental Alienation—Science and Law*.

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Abused children don't exhibit the eight characteristic behaviors that alienated children do.

Baker, A. J. L., Schneiderman, M. (2015). *Bonded to the Abuser*.

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The other parent is seen as irrelevant, irresponsible or even dangerous, whereas the self is seen as the essential, responsible, and safe caretaker. These parents tend to selectively perceive and distort the child's concerns regarding the other parent.

Roseby, V., Johnston, J. R. (1998). Children of Armageddon: Common Developmental Threats in High-Conflict Divorcing Families. *Child and Adolescent Psychiatric Clinics of North America*, 7(2):295–309.