

Three interconnected frameworks: Factor 3 requires the 17 Behaviors; Factor 4 requires the 8 Manifestations.

All four factors must be present simultaneously to conclude alienation — rather than realistic estrangement from a genuinely harmful parent.

THE FOUR-FACTOR MODEL (Baker, Journal of Family Therapy, 2018)

1 Prior Positive Relationship

The child and the now-rejected parent had a close, loving bond before the alienation. Parents who were absent or uninvolved cannot claim victimhood — there must be a relationship to damage.

2 Absence of Maltreatment

The rejected parent has not engaged in abuse, neglect, or seriously deficient parenting that would justify rejection. The rejection must be disproportionate to anything the parent actually did.

3 Alienating Behaviors by the Favored Parent ■ see p.2

The favored parent has engaged in multiple, observable alienating behaviors from the list of 17. These must be demonstrable — not merely alleged — and must have fostered the unjustified rejection.

4 Eight Behavioral Manifestations in the Child ■ see below

The child exhibits the eight specific behavioral signs of alienation identified by Gardner and operationalized by Baker, distinguishing alienation from realistic estrangement.

FACTOR 4 EXPANDED: THE EIGHT BEHAVIORAL MANIFESTATIONS OF ALIENATION IN THE CHILD (Gardner 1998; Baker 2018)

1 Campaign of Denigration — Persistent, extreme criticism of the targeted parent far beyond any justification

5 Automatic Support for the Favored Parent — Reflexively sides with favored parent regardless of facts

2 Weak, Frivolous Reasons for Rejection — Vague, trivial, or absurd explanations inconsistent with prior relationship

6 "Independent Thinker" Phenomenon — Insists the rejection is self-generated, denying all influence

3 Lack of Ambivalence — One parent all-good, the other all-bad; no normal mixed feelings

7 Use of Borrowed Scenarios — Uses adult phrasing and stories sourced from the favored parent

4 Lack of Remorse — No guilt for cruel or rejecting behavior toward the targeted parent

8 Spread of Animosity to Extended Family — Rejection extends to the targeted parent's relatives and friends

Observable behaviors by the favored parent that must be demonstrable — not merely alleged.

These behaviors must be documented, repeated, and linked to the child's unjustified rejection — isolated incidents are insufficient to satisfy Factor 3.

Poisoning the Relationship

Limiting Access & Connection

Erasing & Replacing

1 Denigrate the targeted parent to create the impression they are unsafe, unloving, or unavailable

8 Limit the child's contact so parent and child cannot share experiences meaningfully

11 Ask the child to spy on the other parent

2 Tell the child the other parent does not love them

9 Interfere with calls and communication during separations

12 Ask the child to keep secrets from the other parent

3 Claim the other parent is dangerous

10 Make it difficult for the child to think about, talk about, or view photos of the other parent

13 Refer to the other parent by first name instead of 'mom' or 'dad'

4 Withhold love/affection when child shows warmth toward other parent

14 Refer to a new partner as 'mom' or 'dad'

5 Allow child to opt out of contact, framing it as optional and undesirable

15 Change the child's name to remove association with the other parent

6 Force the child to reject the other parent

16 Withhold information from the other parent

7 Confide personal/legal matters to induce the child's hurt and anger

17 Undermine the other parent's authority