

CHARACTERISTICS OF A CHILD-FOCUSED, NON-FABRICATING PARENT VERSUS CHARACTERISTICS OF AN EX-SPOUSE-FOCUSED, SUSPECT PARENT

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This is not a checklist—just some guidelines:¹

1. Expresses remorse for not protecting the child sufficiently to prevent the abuse; **versus**

Expresses little or no remorse for child – only vindictiveness towards the ex-spouse.

2. Willing to consider other possible explanations for the behavior or statements that aroused suspicion; **versus**

Unwilling to consider any other explanation of the child's statements, behavior, or symptoms.

3. Willing to have the child interviewed without being present; **versus**

Insists on being present when the child is interviewed and prompts him/her when child is questioned about the abuse.

4. Concerned about the impact on the child if he/she has to testify; **versus**

Is eager for the child to testify at all costs.

5. If allegations cannot be verified, they are willing to let go of the investigatory process so long as the child's well-being can be monitored through therapy or some other process; **versus**

Shops for other professionals who will verify her suspicions and involve the child in multiple examinations so the investigation can continue, irrespective of the impact the process is having on the child.

¹ Adapted from the *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry*, 56(4), October 1986, by Patricia Bresee, J.D.; Geoffrey B. Stearns, J.D.; Bruce H. Bess, Ph.D.; Leslie S. Packer, Ph.D.