

Scenario 1: Christian & Mandy

Christian and Mandy started dating when they were both 16. Two months later Mandy learned she was pregnant. Mandy dropped out of high school in her second trimester. She gave birth to a baby boy, Alex. Alex is now 5 months old. He is healthy and developmentally on target. He is well bonded to Mandy and her mother.

Christian graduated high school and is working a minimum wage job. Mandy applied for state assistance and 3 months ago the state established paternity issued a child support order against Christian. Christian had not had contact with Mandy from the time she dropped out of school until paternity was established. He had not contributed to Mandy's or Alex's expenses before the order, but has paid child support regularly since the order.

Christian and his family have been persistent in their attempts to spend time with Alex since paternity was established. Mandy rarely responds to Christian's texts or emails or phone calls from the paternal grandmother. Two months ago she agreed to allow Christian and his mother to meet Alex in her home. She told Christian he could see Alex for an hour a week but that visits had to be supervised by her or her mother at her home. Christian agreed and showed up for six consecutive weeks. Parenting time went well, and Alex was beginning to recognize Christian.

The last two weeks Christian has not visited Alex. He says he is uncomfortable in Mandy's home and sees no reason Alex cannot come to his home. He says his mother is willing to help him during his parenting time and that he has set up a play area and gathered baby supplies for Alex at his home. He would like to have Alex three days a week, including overnights.

Mandy does not agree to Christian taking Alex to his home. She says she barely knows him and doesn't trust he knows how to parent. Mandy says Christian used drugs in high school (pot mostly) and she is concerned that he may still use drugs, although she has not seen any sign of it when he has parenting time. She also says his mother hates her and will do whatever she can to turn the baby against her.

Mandy has returned to school to earn her GED and works part-time. She relies on her mother to care for Alex about 15 hours each week. Alex is able to take a bottle from Mandy's mother.