

RCW 26.11.040 Orders granting visitation—Factors for consideration by the court—Best interest of the child—Presumption in favor of fit parent's decision—Rebuttal. (1)(a) At a hearing pursuant to RCW 26.11.030(8), the court shall enter an order granting visitation if it finds that the child would likely suffer harm or the substantial risk of harm if visitation between the petitioner and the child is not granted and that granting visitation between the child and the petitioner is in the best interest of the child.

(b) An order granting visitation does not confer upon the petitioner the rights and duties of a parent.

(2) In making its determination, the court shall consider the respondent's reasons for denying visitation. It is presumed that a fit parent's decision to deny visitation is in the best interest of the child and does not create a likelihood of harm or a substantial risk of harm to the child.

(3) To rebut the presumption in subsection (2) of this section, the petitioner must prove by clear and convincing evidence that the child would likely suffer harm or the substantial risk of harm if visitation between the petitioner and the child were not granted.

(4) If the court finds that the petitioner has met the standard for rebutting the presumption in subsection (2) of this section, or if there is no presumption because no parent has custody of the child, the court shall consider whether it is in the best interest of the child to enter an order granting visitation. The petitioner must prove by clear and convincing evidence that visitation is in the child's best interest. In determining whether it is in the best interest of the child, the court shall consider the following, nonexclusive factors:

(a) The love, affection, and strength of the current relationship between the child and the petitioner and how the relationship is beneficial to the child;

(b) The length and quality of the prior relationship between the child and the petitioner before the respondent denied visitation, including the role performed by the petitioner and the emotional ties that existed between the child and the petitioner;

(c) The relationship between the petitioner and the respondent;

(d) The love, affection, and strength of the current relationship between the child and the respondent;

(e) The nature and reason for the respondent's objection to granting the petitioner visitation;

(f) The effect that granting visitation will have on the relationship between the child and the respondent;

(g) The residential time-sharing arrangements between the parties having residential time with the child;

(h) The good faith of the petitioner and respondent;

(i) Any history of physical, emotional, or sexual abuse or neglect by the petitioner, or any history of physical, emotional, or sexual abuse or neglect by a person residing with the petitioner if visitation would involve contact between the child and the person with such history;

(j) The child's reasonable preference, if the court considers the child to be of sufficient age to express a preference;

(k) Any other factor relevant to the child's best interest; and

(l) The fact that the respondent has not lost his or her parental rights by being adjudicated as an unfit parent. [2018 c 183 s 4.]