

## When Your Child Only Wants One Parent

My son had been going through a l-o-n-g mommy-focused time. We had mostly acquiesced to his desire to “have mommy,” as he would scream and cry and I would always cave in the end and go to him. With my new knowledge of the Parenting by Connection tools, we started setting some limits around his preferences when he was right around two years old. I had been involved in a consistent Listening Partnership and was feeling more tolerant of his strong feelings in general, and we’d done some Staylistening with the warm but firm limit of, “It’s time for you to be with your dad now.” All of these approaches had brought a fair amount of success.

But on this particular night, we tried a slightly different approach.

It was time for The Bedtime Routine. It had been decided that it was Dad’s turn for books, snuggles, and tuck-ins. When I tried to give my son a hug and pass him off to his dad in the rocking chair, he clung to me and started to fuss. I dramatically pulled him back from my husband’s arms and said playfully,



Photo courtesy of Christopher Eriksen

“No, no, you CAN’T have my baby! He’s mine, MINE!!”

My husband retorted with, “Please let me have him! I want him so!”

I swung Joshua in my arms as he giggled and I counted, “One, two, three....OH...No, no, no, you can’t have him!”

We went back and forth arguing over who would have him. I would almost drop him in his father’s lap and then run back across the room saying, “No, no, no!”

Eventually, after ten or so minutes of back-and-forth with prolific giggles, I finally plopped him in his dad’s lap and he snuggled right in and waved good-bye to me.

I left, Dad completed The Bedtime Routine, and my son slept soundly through the night (not an everyday occurrence).

– A Hand in Hand Parent