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Shining Hope

The "Shining Hope" newsletter offers valuable resources and support to families facing child abduction and parental alienation. Our publication provides uplifting and informative messages to parents dealing with the abduction of their children, fostering a strong and supportive community throughout their difficult journey. Stay informed and up-to-date with the latest news, events, and pressing issues through our comprehensive and timely newsletter.



[Donate now](#) at STL's official website! Your support brings kids HOME!

Bi-Weekly Parent Support Zoom Call: Email contactshinethelight@gmail.com for dates and the link to join.

STL's new [YouTube channel](#) is now live, offering weekly tools, stories, and encouragement to help families stay supported and empowered!

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*Even a small light
can guide
the way.*
”

Rebuilding Connection: The Rise and Reality of Reunification Therapy

With growing reliance on psychological frameworks in custody decisions, reunification therapy is reshaping how courts approach fractured family relationships.

Across family courts in the United States and internationally, an intervention known as reunification therapy is becoming increasingly central in custody and separation cases. Designed to repair strained or severed relationships between a parent and child, the practice is now frequently ordered in high-conflict disputes.

However, questions are growing about how it is applied and whether it consistently serves the best interests of families.

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Rise and Reality of Reunification Therapy

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When a child resists or refuses contact with one parent, courts often rely on recommendations from court-appointed mental health professionals and may mandate therapeutic sessions intended to restore that relationship. In principle, the goal is clear: to support reconnection in a controlled, clinically guided environment. In practice, however, outcomes are often far more complex.

The [American Psychological Association](#), notes that custody evaluations now include behavioral and relational assessments, but some frameworks remain controversial and unevenly regulated.

In cases that cross state or international borders, the complexities deepen even further. Parents seeking the return of their child or the enforcement of visitation under international agreements such as the Hague Convention on the Civil Aspects of International Child Abduction encounter a different reality.

While courts emphasize the importance of maintaining or restoring parent-child relationships, that principle is not always applied consistently when a child resists contact. In some cases, a child's reluctance is accepted without deeper examination of how it developed. This raises important questions about whether sufficient attention is given to possible influence, prolonged separation, or the circumstances shaping the child's perspective.

In cases of international or interstate parental child abduction, concerns are often raised about uneven enforcement, limited access to specialized professionals, and the absence of clear, coordinated support.

While international agreements and federal frameworks exist to address these situations, many families describe a process that feels fragmented, unfair, and difficult to navigate. The gap between policy and practice can leave parents questioning whether the systems in place are functioning as intended.

Organizations like Shine The Light For Abducted Children, Inc. operate within this space, working directly with families navigating these realities. Through advocacy, education, and professional networks, STL brings attention to the challenges faced by left-behind parents and works to advance fair custody outcomes and access to legal and support resources.

As awareness grows, so too does the opportunity to examine how systems can evolve. For many families, the processes intended to protect parent-child relationships are not always applied with the consistency, clarity, and level of care that children and parents deserve.



Shine The Light For Abducted Children, Inc.
Meeting families where they are and walking with them toward healthy futures.

Staying in the Fight: The Long Game of Bringing Your Child Home

In cases of parental child abduction, the path to bringing a child home is rarely quick or straightforward. For many left-behind parents, what begins as an urgent crisis becomes a prolonged legal and emotional battle requiring endurance, strategy, and unwavering persistence.

Family law professionals and advocates often describe this process as a long game. It is not a period of passive waiting, but a sustained effort to document patterns, maintain consistent involvement, and build a credible record over time. In cases involving estrangement or alienation, outcomes are often influenced by documented behavior, demonstrated stability, and persistence rather than any single intervention.

A parent's continued efforts to communicate, comply with legal processes, and pursue enforcement can become critical factors in how a case evolves.

A Parent's Perspective: Finding Strength in Unexpected Places

Some parents describe developing mental frameworks to endure the length and intensity of the process. One parent interviewed said they were drawn to military dramas and stories of extreme endurance.

"It was not something I expected," the parent explained. "But watching stories about discipline, resilience, and people pushing through impossible situations changed how I saw my own. I made a connection, and it helped me understand that this is not a short fight. It is something you train yourself to endure."

International and interstate cases may involve additional legal pathways, including the [Hague Convention on the Civil Aspects of International Child Abduction](#). While these processes can be complex, they are often strengthened by early action, thorough documentation, and continued follow through over time.

One practical step to follow:

- Keep a detailed and organized record of all communication attempts, legal filings, and case developments to establish a clear and consistent timeline.

In these cases, progress is not always visible in the moment. But there is real reason to stay encouraged. Persistence matters. Systems do respond, and over time, steady effort can create the conditions necessary for enforcement, intervention, and ultimately, reunification.



**Strength to Endure
Strategy to Move Forward.
Persistence to Bring Them Home**



LEFT-BEHIND PARENT ACTION CHECKLIST

A Quick Guide to Staying Organized, Informed, and Engaged in the Fight

Write out a clear
timeline of events



Professionals in child safety and family law highlight the value of **preparation**. Securing court orders, keeping detailed records, and documenting communication give parents practical tools to stay organized and support their case over time.

Consistency also plays a critical role. Ongoing documentation, timely follow up, and clear communication can help establish patterns that courts and professionals often rely on when evaluating cases. Even small, consistent efforts can contribute to a stronger position.

Access to the right resources and support systems can improve outcomes. **Connections** with experienced professionals, advocacy organizations, and informed networks help parents better understand their options and move forward with greater clarity and confidence.

Save all communication
including texts, emails,
and calls



File for enforcement of
custody or visitation
orders



Contact Shine The Light For
Abducted Children, Inc.



References & Further Reading

- [National Center for Missing & Exploited Children](#)
- [Children's Passport Issuance Alert Program \(CPIAP\)](#)
- [U.S. Department of Justice](#)
- [Federal Bureau of Investigation](#)
- [U.S. Department of State](#)
- [Hague Conference on Private International Law](#)
- [Child Welfare Information Gateway](#)

Contact Us

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Share your stories, ideas, or feedback with our Editor at info@tiffanyfontana.com. We value your input and look forward to hearing from you!