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## Technology Helps Divorced Parents, Children Keep In Touch

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**RALEIGH, N.C.** -- North Carolina could soon join a growing list of states to offer divorced parents a high-tech way to stay in contact with their children after a custody dispute.

The concept of "virtual visitation" allows divorced parents to communicate with their children through video conferencing and instant messaging.

"We have a lot of families doing online visits, using technologies to do visits, but it's almost always by agreements. It's not at the behest of a judge. It's not by court order," said Lee Rosen, a Raleigh divorce lawyer.

Utah and Wisconsin are the only states that have virtual visitation laws, but legislatures in Illinois and Virginia are considering similar bills. No North Carolina lawmaker is sponsoring such legislation in this state, but the issue is on the General Assembly's radar -- a pre-draft bill has been drawn up.

Rosen said virtual visitation is a way to use technology to maintain family relationships, especially when parents and children are separated by great distances or rancor between ex-spouses.

"With the mobility that we have, people are spread out all over the nation, and so their children are often left behind. Virtual visitation allows a parent who lives in another city to spend a tremendous amount of time with their child," he said. "Virtual visitation should not replace regular visitation. It should supplement regular visitation."

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