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Local News

'Virtual Visits' Could Be Ideal In Long-Distance Custody Cases

Posted: Sep. 13, 2006

RALEIGH, N.C. — Most days, Adam Goldenberg can only see the expressions of his 4-year-old son, Jeremy, in photographs.

That's because Goldenberg is divorced from Jeremy's mother and the child lives with her in New Jersey. He tries to talk on the phone with his son three or four times a week, but says it is not the same as seeing the child's smiling face.

- On The Web:

InternetVisitation.org

"At 4 years old, you go 30, 40 days without a visit, and then, you see each other again, you just hope he knows who you are," Goldenberg said.

Goldenberg is hoping to use a high-quality Web camera to connect with his son more personally -- "virtual visitation."

"Being able to see him and him see me, as well, while we're talking would mean everything," said Goldenburg.

"A mom or a dad who doesn't have custody can literally tuck children into bed at night, and they can read that story one-on-one over the Internet," said attorney Lee Rosen, whose clients constantly ask him about virtual visitation. "It changes everything in terms of the possibilities for relationships."

For many clients, Rosen said, it is something that can easily be negotiated as long as both parties agree to it and have the financial means to pay for it.

A Web camera can cost anywhere from about \$50 to \$150, depending on the quality. Most high-speed Internet services run an average of about \$40 per month.

Currently, North Carolina judges do not have the authority to mandate virtual visitation, but three states have passed laws giving their judges the authority to do so. Bills on the issue are pending in four other states.

Rosen is lobbying for legislation that would give judges that authority in North Carolina.

Many judges, such as Wake County Chief District Judge Joyce Hamilton, see it as a positive step.

"I think, in many cases, it would be a good idea," Hamilton said. "Not only would it give the parent that contact with the child, but it would give the child the same kind of contact with the parent -- to be able to see that parent when they're not physically with them."

- Reporter: [Amanda Lamb](#)
- Photographer: [Chad Flowers](#)
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