



Reasoning with Ethics

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Ethics in action creates character.

Use this blog to:

1. Lead class discussions in social studies, civics, ethics or advisory classes.
2. Teach students skills to analyze cases with core ethical values.
3. Recognize skills in support of SEE's Tri-Factor Model of ethical functioning.

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Terminating Parental Rights

A Canadian father has been jailed for failing to comply with a court order regarding his 14-year-old daughter's request to begin irreversible gender transition treatments. The story notes the father has been separated from the child's mother and that the mother, the girl's school, hospital staff, and the courts are all in favor of supporting the girl's wishes.



In a different story this fall, it merits recognition that a UK court awarded a lawsuit to a 23-year-old who wanted to de-transition and claimed the clinic that performed transgender procedures on her as a 14-year-old was negligent as minors are developmentally unable to provide reasonable consent for a life-changing procedure.

The Canadian case is difficult on many levels. The split in parental agreement, the role of school and hospital counselors in their encouragement of the transition, and the outcome of a father going to jail in objection to his minor daughter's treatments are all challenging issues. Terminating parental rights is complicated by the split in opinion between the mother and father. The question of the permanence of the treatment versus psychological support and waiting for transitioning treatment until one is an adult is controversial.

Terminating parental rights is a very serious action and historically has required a substantial burden of proof of circumstances such as abuse, neglect, abandonment, long-term illness, drug addiction or incarceration, and inability to care. In the Canadian case, a judge claimed the father was exhibiting "family violence" by refusing to accept his daughter's wishes and continuing to use her birth name and call her his daughter.

SEE asks students to consider the ethical (not legal) question of jailing a father over what is recognized as a complicated and controversial treatment for a minor child. Applying an analysis lens of core values, what values and how are they supported or violated in placing this father in jail for objecting to gender-transitioning treatment for his 14-year-old child?

Supplemental Links:

NY Post: (3/18/21) Father arrested for discussing child's gender transition:

<https://nypost.com/2021/03/18/man-arrested-for-discussing-childs-gender-in-court-order-violation/>
O'Connor Family Law, Can parental rights be terminated-- <https://familylawma.com/blog/can-my-parental-rights-be-terminated/>

Avvo Stories, Terminating Parental Rights-- <https://stories.avvo.com/relationships/family-kids/easy-terminate-parental-rights.html>

Daily Wire: Father arrested for alleged gender slur-- <https://www.dailywire.com/news/father-arrested-jailed-for-contempt-after-referring-to-his-daughter-as-she>

Oplindia: Canadian man jailed for calling female child daughter-- <https://www.opindia.com/2021/03/canadian-man-jailed-for-calling-his-biologically-female-child-as-daughter/>

YoursNews: Father arrested for gender slur (3:00)--

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1eE9LROM778>, this source is unknown and contains images for the video that are not from the specific case but attempt to dramatize the story.

Reuters: UK Court Rules against Trans Clinic (11/30/20) -- <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-britain-lgbt-transgender-trfn/uk-court-rules-against-trans-clinic-over-treatment-for-children-idUSKBN28B3AV>