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Man charged with molesting son wants visitation rights

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NICEVILLE, Fla. - A man convicted of physically abusing his son and charged with sexually molesting the boy, now 8, may ask Florida courts to overturn a Texas ruling that bars him from seeing his son, the father's lawyer said.

Associate District Judge Suzanne Radcliffe last week in Galveston County, Texas, prohibited Peter Michael Reed, who lives in the Niceville area, from having any contact with his son for two years.

Reed is accused of sexually assaulting his son in Texas City, Texas, during a court-ordered, unsupervised visit, according to a police report.

"I'm shocked a Florida court would give him unrestricted visitation," Radcliffe said after issuing the protective order.

Reed's lawyer, Tad Nelson, said he may ask that Radcliffe's order be voided, contending Florida courts have jurisdiction over visitation rights because his client was divorced in Okaloosa County, Fla.

Any motion to dismiss the order probably will not be filed before Reed is tried in Texas. A condition of his \$300,000 bond is that he not go near his son.

Reed, who works for a development company in Destin, declined comment.

He was convicted of aggravated and simple child abuse seven years ago in the Florida Panhandle. He was accused of shaking his then-3-month-old son violently enough to break ribs, then later dropping the child, causing a skull fracture.

Reed was arrested last month on Texas charges of aggravated sexual assault of a child and sexual performance by a child.

Mendy Montgomery, Reed's ex-wife, is opposing any effort to restore his visitation rights.

Florida Circuit Judge Thomas Remington in 1997 superseded a 60-day protective order that limited Reed only to supervised visits. Montgomery had obtained the order in Texas after claiming her son had been bruised during a visit with his father.

Remington's ruling was based on a recommendation from a guardian ad litem appointed to look out for the child's interests.