

Parenting Coordination – Policies and Informed Consent

Overview: Parenting coordination is a quasi-legal, mental health, alternative dispute resolution process. It combines assessment, education, case management and mediation. A parenting coordinator may also assist with decision making when so ordered by the court. Parenting coordination is child-focused and oriented to serve the best interests of your child or children. The objective of parenting coordination is to assist in the implementation of a parenting plan, monitor compliance with the plan, help resolve conflicts in a timely and cost effective manner, and to facilitate safe, healthy and meaningful parent-child relationships. The duties of a parent coordinator include providing parents with problem solving and conflict management services, monitoring compliance with court orders, and providing parents, attorneys, and the court with recommendations for new or modified parenting time provisions, as necessary.

Parent coordination differs from psychotherapy and mediation: there is no therapist/client privilege, the process is not confidential, and medical insurance will not reimburse for parenting coordination. In addition, the scope of parent coordination is limited to matters concerning your child or children. It is hoped that participants will maintain a respectful tone, make good faith efforts toward cooperation, and prioritize the interests of the child over other competing concerns.

Appointments: I generally meet with each parent and child separately for an initial one hour visit, followed by 90 minute conjoint visits. I sometimes meet with parents separately beyond the first visit, but the content of these visits is not confidential and a summary of these visits will be made available to the other parent. Both parents must agree to allow me to meet individually with the child/children and to allow meetings with the other parent and the child/children together.

If you arrive late for an appointment the session will still end session will end at the allotted time. Cancellation requires 24 hour notice. There is a \$100 charge for missed or late-cancelled appointments.

Payment for Service: My hourly rate is \$200 for all services except court testimony/deposition, which is billed at \$400 an hour. Charges accrue for all case related work including phone consultations, collateral interviews, e-mail exchanges, report writing and review of case materials. To begin the parent coordination process, there is a required \$2000 retainer divided equally between the parents (\$1000 per parent) unless a different fee arrangement is specified in the court order or agreed upon by both parents. The retainer must be paid in full prior to the first date of service. Additional funds will be requested when either parent's retainer falls below \$200 or the combined retainer fund is less than \$400.

If fees are being divided equally between parents, conjoint meetings and individual sessions with children will be charged equally and individual visits and contacts with parents will be charged to the individual parent. Charges are assessed to the parent who is the direct recipient of services. For example, if a parent calls me, that parent will be charged for the time. If it is necessary for me to

call a parent to mediate a dispute, investigate a problem, or manage a crisis, the parent receiving the call would be billed for the time. Fees for conference calls involving both parents will be divided equally as will time spent reviewing background materials. However, when a parent submits additional documents for review, the parent making the request will be charged.

Any unpaid bills will accrue interest at the rate of 1.5% per month. A \$50.00 surcharge will be assessed for any returned checks.

Disclosure of Information: Information disclosed in parent coordination meetings will be handled with discretion. However, certain legal protections, such as confidentiality and privilege, do not apply to parent coordination. All parties must agree that my notes, taken in the process of any interviews, will not be released. In order to fulfill my duties as a parent coordinator I must be able to communicate with the court in both written form and in testimony and to speak with your attorneys. I will also need to communicate with therapists, teachers, physicians, law enforcement officials, and other professionals who have relevant information about parent or child function. Parents must agree to sign all releases necessary to obtain information from these professionals.

Statement of Informed Consent: I have read and fully understand the preceding statements and conditions of service. By signing this form, I am agreeing to these terms and authorize Dr. Freedman to communicate with the court and with the attorneys involved in my case for the duration of his appointment as parent coordinator.

Participant Signature

Evan B. Freedman, PhD, ABPP

Date

Date