

WHAT CAN I EXPECT FROM MY PARENTING COORDINATOR?

Parenting Coordinators (PC) are hired to help parents who have difficulty parenting and making decisions in a cooperative way. It is the job of a PC to assist parents in implementing their parenting plan. A PC helps parents resolve disputes in a timely manner. When parents are at an impasse, a PC can and will make decisions for them. All decisions are made in the best interests of the children.

A PC educates parents about children's needs. Parenting education is offered. In some cases, referrals are made to parenting education classes or other community resources. Also, where appropriate, referrals for individual or family therapy are made. A PC never acts in this capacity – all referrals are made to outside providers.

A PC consults with mental health professionals, legal professionals, teachers, physicians, family members, step parents, nannies and/or anyone who can provide valuable information about the best interests of the children involved. Please do not have anyone contact your PC directly. Your PC will let you know who he/she would like to consult with to help your child(ren).

The following functions are within the scope of a PC:

- Assessment
- Education
- Referrals to outside resources
- Case management
- Conflict management
- Decision making.

The following are typical issues that are addressed by a PC:

- Minor changes to parenting time
- Holiday arrangements
- Transitions or exchange arrangements
- Health care management
- Child rearing issues
- Mental health care
- Education or daycare arrangements
- Extracurricular activities
- Travel details
- Communications issues
- Extended family contact
- Personal possessions issues.

The role of the Parenting Coordinator includes:

1. Assisting parents in successfully implementing their parenting plan as provided by order of the court and/or stipulated agreement.
2. Assessing the family's overall functioning with regard to cooperative parenting and educating where necessary, to raise the level of functioning.
3. Guiding parents toward the appropriate communication and negotiation practices. This will assist the parents in moving through disputes which might impact the children.
4. Recording and monitoring family progress in moving toward a working system of effective communication and cooperation.
5. Intervening in conflict to assist parents in moving through any dispute which may threaten to return the parties to court.
6. Consulting with all professionals involved with the family. This may include: therapists, doctors, extended family members, significant others and legal counsel.
7. Working with the parents to improve the parenting plan, which may result in changes to the court order.
8. Acting as a source of information and guidance for parents throughout the coordination timeframe.

The role of parents in this process includes:

1. Full cooperation with the coordination process by participating in discussion with an open mind and in a spirit of compromise.
2. Supporting the children's needs to have a full relationship with both parents.
3. The ability to live up to agreements in implementing new parenting practices.
4. The commitment to seek guidance from the Parent Coordinator at any time that they are not sure how to proceed with a particular issue that may disturb the children or create conflict with the other parent.