

Parenting Coordinators: WHY?

Because parenting coordination helps high conflict families resolve their disputes out of the court and reduces the excessive use of litigation...

Because parenting coordination serves as another alternative dispute resolution method where high conflict cases with child related issues were not suitable for mediation...

Because parenting coordination helps families survive conflict with a more intact family unit, even if separated, reducing the harmful effects of conflict which jeopardizes the well-being of children.

Parenting Coordinators: WHO?

A Parenting Coordinator is defined in the 11th Judicial Circuit as a licensed mental health provider and/or a certified family mediator with a minimum of three years of extensive experience in the following disciplines: family systems theory, developmental psychology, high conflict divorce resolution techniques including mediation, children adjustment issues specific to divorce including parental alienation, domestic abuse, and knowledge of the legal facets of divorce.

Parenting Coordinators who are on the Family Court Services Resource List have also participated in a four hour training on the policies and procedures developed by this circuit.

Parenting Coordinators: WHEN?

With the consent of the parties, a parenting coordinator may be appointed by the court to provide the parents with assistance to effectively implement existing court orders on issues of shared parenting when:

- A. The parties have failed to adequately implement their shared parenting in relation to their child(ren);
- B. Mediation has not been successful or has been determined by the court to be inappropriate;
- C. The court finds that appointment of a parenting coordinator is necessary to protect and sustain safe, healthy, and meaningful parent/child relationships;
- D. The parties can afford to pay for the parenting coordinator's services or the services of the parenting coordinator can be provided at no expense to the parties; and
- E. The court has entered a temporary or final order setting out the nature and extent of the contact between the children and each parent.

Parenting Coordinators: HOW?

The 11th Circuit's Administrative Order on Parenting Coordination directs that Family Court Services assist the parties with the designation of a parenting coordinator when court ordered. The parties may agree upon a parenting coordinator who meets the qualifications or someone who, in the opinion of the parties and upon approval by the court, is otherwise qualified by training or expertise to serve as parenting coordinator for the case.

If the parties cannot agree, Family Court Services will provide the designation of a parenting coordinator based upon experience, location, language, and fee structure. Family Court Services is available to provide parenting coordination to indigent cases when directed by the Court.

Family Court Services is located on the 15th Floor of the Lawson E. Thomas Courthouse Center Building.

The Administrative Order (06-03), Order of Referral to Parenting Coordinator, and professional application to be included on the Family Court Services resource list can be found at www.jud11.flcourts.org.

WHAT IS PARENTING COORDINATION?

Parenting coordination is a process where an impartial third person, designated by a court order of appointment, helps parties implement their parenting plan by facilitating the resolution of disputes between parents and/or legal guardians, providing education, making recommendations to the parties and, with prior approval of the parties and the court, making decisions within the scope of the court order of appointment.

The parenting coordinator may assist the parties by providing education regarding the developmental needs of the children and the effects of parental separation on family members, co-parenting, and parental communication. The parenting coordinator monitors compliance with the established parenting plan and assists the parties in effectively facilitating their time-sharing arrangements. The parenting coordinator will use conciliation skills to assist the parties in resolving child related issues and reducing the potential for future parental conflict.

The process of parenting coordination is **NOT** confidential.

What a Parenting Coordinator is NOT: A parenting coordinator is not a custody evaluator, mediator, therapist, financial advisor, attorney, or guardian ad litem.

IS THE PARENTING COORDINATION PROCESS FOR ME/FOR MY CLIENT?

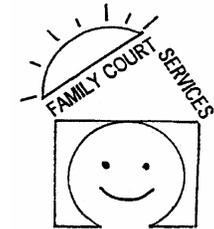
Parenting coordination is appropriate for high conflict cases dealing with child related issues, such as when:

- mediation has not been successful or has been determined by the judge to be inappropriate
- children are denied emotional and/or physical access to a parent or have severely limited parental/guardian contact
- there are restrictions on children's access to extended family members
- there is interference or refusal of access to information about child(ren)'s health, education and welfare
- the parents/guardians are unable to agree as to substantive issues concerning the child(ren)
- there is a high rate of re-litigation especially concerning non-legal issues
- there has been frequent change in lawyers

Parenting coordination is NOT for cases in which it has been determined that the process may compromise the safety of any party, the minor children, or the parenting coordinator.

PARENTING COORDINATION in the 11th Judicial Circuit Family Court:

YOUR QUESTIONS ANSWERED



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