

PARENTAL RESPONSIBILITIES/PARENTING TIME EVALUATION AGREEMENT

To assist parents, attorneys, and judges in parental responsibilities and parenting time disputes, I provide a comprehensive psychological and interpersonal family evaluation. The goal in an evaluation is to provide recommendations describing a constructive situation for maximizing the child's relationship with each parent. My aim is to preserve the opportunity for future relating between each parent and child. I strive to identify the strengths of both parents and not to assess blame.

A Parental Responsibility Evaluator (PRE) is an impartial expert either appointed by the court or stipulated to by the parties. I have extensive clinical experience in custody evaluations. I have been active in the field through written and seminar presentations on child custody issues as well as serving actively for the Metropolitan Denver Interdisciplinary Committee (MDIC).

In divorce evaluations, the traditional rules of confidentiality in psychotherapy do not apply. For example, in efforts to learn about a family, I often discuss comments made by one party with other family members. This allows me to better understand what has taken place in the family. I make such disclosures after careful consideration of the family situation. The final report will contain information used in formulating my conclusions.

THE EVALUATION PROCESS

The evaluation begins with meetings between each parent and myself. I answer any questions about the evaluation process. I discuss whom I may want to additionally interview (e.g., grandparents or significant others in the family). Each parent then signs a contract of service which clarifies payment responsibilities.

Intake and Personal History Questionnaires and Autobiographies

As part of the information gathering process I ask parents to complete several questionnaires. The "Parent Questionnaire" asks each parent to briefly answer a variety of questions related to parenting, health, legal history, lifestyle and the co-parent relationship. "The Parental Responsibilities Evaluation Intake Questionnaire" provides me with information specific to the family and their post-separation history. I ascertain what problems may have arisen with the current parenting time

arrangement. I ask that each parent share his or her view of what would work best for the children. I also ask each adult to tell us about their upbringing by filling out a "Personal History Questionnaire." Information from these questionnaires serves as points of discussion in future interviews. Each parent is also asked to provide an autobiography which helps in understanding people and events that have helped shape who they are.

Child Assessment

The assessment of the child or children begins after the initial adult interviews. Whenever possible, I ask that each parent bring the children for some of the assessment appointments. I will attempt to pace the assessment process to minimize distress to the children.

The child assessment techniques include play therapy observations, interviews, drawings, and various children's games. Formal testing of children may involve social skills, behavioral, and personality inventories as well as other clinical procedures. Each parent completes a Child Development Inventory for each child.

An important part of the evaluation process is the observation of parents and children in joint sessions. I schedule one to two interactive sessions with each parent and child(ren). The interactive sessions include a variety of formats, from unstructured free playtime together to task-structured activities.

Each parent provides a list of five personal references who are familiar with their parenting history. I ask for Releases of Information to speak to teachers, counselors, physicians, and other professionals who have worked with members of the family.

Psychological Assessment

Each adult has a psychological profile drawn from clinical interviews, psychosocial history, clinical observation and the administration of personality assessment instruments. Since there is no direct correlation between personality functioning and parental capacity, my goal is to understand how parents' psychological functioning affects their parenting.

If there are questions concerning drug or alcohol problems for any involved adult in the evaluation, I may screen for issues myself or refer that parent for a substance abuse evaluation.

Evaluation Summary and Recommendations

All information from interviews, observations, references, written materials and test data is reviewed extensively. I identify the children's present and potential future needs. I develop an understanding of the capacities brought to parenting by each

adult. From an understanding of the children's needs and the adults' capacities, I formulate recommendations regarding parenting time and custody for the family. I send the report to the courts, to each attorney, including the guardian ad litem or child's representative, if any, and to the parties. It is imperative that the parents not share the final report with the child(ren). The format and language of the report are intended for the adult reader. Children may misunderstand some of the information, possibly complicating their perceptions of their parents, or leaving them feeling guilty or personally criticized. I encourage participants to request further explanation of any procedures not clear to them in this document.

I have read and agree to the evaluation process as described above.

Signature

Date

01/2018 Julie Van Heyningen, Psy.D., P.C.