



PARENTING PARTNERSHIPS, INC.

Parenting Coordination Advisement Form

Parenting Coordination services offered by Parenting Partnerships, Inc. focus on reducing parental conflict in order to enhance the child's emotional functioning and facilitate shared parenting. While several skills of the mental health professionals are used in assisting families, this service is not psychotherapy or counseling.

Parenting Coordination in Texas is defined as "An impartial third party appointed by the court to assist parents in resolving issues relating to parenting and other family issues arising from an order in a suit affecting the parent-child relationship." TFC 153.601(3)

The Parenting Coordinator is limited to aiding the parents in:

- (1) identifying disputed issues;
- (2) reducing misunderstandings;
- (3) clarifying priorities;
- (4) exploring possibilities for problem solving;
- (5) developing methods of collaboration in parenting;
- (6) understanding parenting plans and reaching agreements about parenting issues to be included in a parenting plan; and
- (7) complying with the court's order regarding conservatorship or possession of and access to the child.

Intake

In order to begin services with families, the following must be on file for each adult:

- A fully completed data form
- a completed intake form
- a copy of the court order
- a consent form
- a signed copy of this contract with initials on each page
- a \$450.00 retainer per parent

Assuming the Parenting Coordinator agrees to accept the referral, parties will receive an intake questionnaire or may print the form out online. Additional information may be required depending on the order of the Court.

After a case has been accepted for services parents or their lawyers must then provide any pertinent reports. These may include additional intake information, affidavit material, records regarding either parent, records regarding the children, correspondence, reports, prior assessments, etc. These may be reviewed by the Parenting Coordinator prior to setting meetings.

Meetings

Depending on the specific role establish in the order of the court, the Parenting Coordinator may have joint sessions with the parents, individual sessions with the parents, sessions involving other relevant family members, meet with the children, consult with other family service providers, and make home visits.

Unless prohibited by the court order, the Parenting Coordinator is authorized to interview the child(ren) privately in order to ascertain the child's needs as to the issues. In conducting such an interview, the Parenting Coordinator will not encourage or facilitate the child(ren) in choosing between the parents, but may encourage the child to understand they live in two homes.

During the meetings with the parents or other relatives the Parenting Coordinator may provide education about co-parenting, communication, and child development. The Parenting Coordinator may coach the parents to better communicate with each other and our children, and may refer the parents to other professionals for additional services.

Telephone Contact

All telephone contact initiated by the parents will be limited to scheduling of appointments. Telephone calls initiated by the parents will be returned with the discretion of the Parenting Coordinator. Communications other than sessions need to occur in writing via email, fax, or mail.

Confidentiality

Reports to the Court are limited to whether the process should continue.

By the way of a release, all therapists, attorneys, ad litem, visitation supervisors, physicians, child care providers, educators, and significant others involved, and previous or current evaluators are authorized to release information directly to the Parenting Coordinator. In turn, the Parenting Coordinator is authorized to discuss significant information with these individuals or service providers in order to assist in the process.

The Parenting Coordination process requires open and honest communication in order to succeed. Therefore, all written and oral communications made during the Parenting Coordination are privileged; and no electronic and tape recordings will be made during Parenting Coordination.

The Parenting Coordinator is **required to report** certain matters, such as incidents of **child abuse or threats of physical violence**, and confidentiality does not extend to these matters.

Emergencies

If an emergency occurs during the time families are receiving Parenting Coordination services, the parents are to call 911 or crisis intervention services.

Disruption

While every precaution short of physical intervention will be taken to secure the safety of participants, they cannot be assured. A guaranty that no harm will occur during each session is neither stated nor implied. However, special arrangements may be made to allow for increased security such as changing arrival times if there is a TRO and a request by either parent.

Process Regarding Complaints

If either parent is dissatisfied with the performance of the Parenting Coordinator they can make their opinions known by following these three steps to either resolve the issue between them and the Parenting Coordinator:

Step 1: The parent will discuss the problem with the Parenting Coordinator in a joint session.

Step 2: The parent will put their complaint into a written summary of one page or less. The summary is to be given to the Coordinator and the other parent for review.

Step 3: The parent may request another Parenting Coordinator.

Step 4: The parent may request that the court terminate services or appoint another Parenting Coordinator.

Termination

The Parenting Coordinator reserves the right to withdraw from the role as Parenting Coordinator should he or she feel that effective change is no longer occurring. The parents, as well as their respective attorneys, will be given two weeks notice of the decision to withdraw. The name of a trained professional competent to assume the role of Coordinator will be provided to both parents. The Parenting Coordinator may elect to continue to act as Coordinator until such a time as a smooth transition has been achieved to the new Parenting Coordinator.

Financial Obligations

An initial retainer of \$450.00 per parent is required and a retainer fee of \$300.00 per parent will be maintained. Payments for the retainer and futures sessions may be made with cash, check, or money order. Missed appointment and late notice of cancellation fees will be billed to the parent canceling and payment is expected within 7 days of receipt. Checks should be made out to Parenting Partnerships. If payment is not made the session will be rescheduled. Payment for the canceled session will be paid by the parent or parents in non-compliance and will be for the entire session fee for the duration the session was scheduled. There is a \$30 returned check fee per returned check.

If either parent must cancel, it must be done within 48 weekday business hours of the scheduled appointment. It is the canceling party's responsibility to reschedule the meeting. When the appointment is a joint meeting, the canceling party will notify all participants of this change and the date and time of the rescheduled visit. If cancellation is not done within 24 weekday business hours of the scheduled visit, the entire appointment fee will be charged to

the canceling party. Payments for the canceled visit must be paid prior to the next scheduled visit.

Business hours are defined as Monday through Friday, 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Co-parenting Partnerships Children in the Middle Co-parenting Class

Completion of the Children in the Middle Co-parenting Class is required within the first month of services. Class schedules are available at www.childreninthemiddle.com/classes2.htm.

Each Parent's Fee Schedule Includes

The rate for Parenting Coordination services is \$150 per hour rounded up to the nearest 15 minute increment. This includes all services including reviewing documentation, meetings, correspondences, phone contact, email, court time, responses to subpoenas, and consultation with other family service providers.

The amount charged for the services will be equally divided (with the exception of individual sessions) unless the Parenting Coordinator is provided with a certified copy of the divorce decree or order that states otherwise. If the judge's order to participate in the program stipulates that only one parent be financially responsible and the either parent cancels without 24 hour notice, the canceling parent is responsible for that charge. There may be times when the Parenting Coordinator deems it appropriate to charge only one parent a particular fee. Phone calls will be billed to the parent who initiates the call unless otherwise directed in the order.

Summary Signature Page

I understand that the Parenting Coordinator cannot change the legal custody status of my child(ren). I understand that the Parenting Coordinator has full discretion regard program implementation as outlined in this document.

I understand that my participation with a Parenting Coordinator can be instrumental reducing the conflict between co-parents. I agree to maintain a serious committal to the program by abiding by the guidelines and requirements of the program as noted herein. Further, I agree to maintain scheduled appointments and will not interfere in the process by refusing to attend sessions or frequently reschedule appointments.

I understand Parenting Coordination is an attempt to coordinate and implement a co-parenting plan that addresses current and future issues related to raising children between two homes. Further, I understand Parenting Coordination does not involve adult's property, finances, or other issues that do not directly involve co-parenting.

I understand by signing this, I am allowing free and open disclosure between the Parenting Coordinator and each parent, children, lawyers, teachers, Courts or other parties as deemed necessary at the full discretion of the Parenting Coordinator.

I understand I may not engage the Parenting Coordinator in conversation without the other parent or other parties present unless specifically addressing scheduling issues related to

Parenting Coordination appointments, or otherwise instructed by the Parenting Coordinator.

I understand telephone calls to the Parenting Coordinator shall be conducted only during weekdays and the regular business office hours of the Parenting Coordinator. Phone calls will be made only in regards to scheduling issues. I understand that messages left for the Parenting Coordinator may take up to 24 weekday business hours to return, and I will not call more than once per 24 hour period unless I am calling to cancel a previous request for a return call. I understand if an emergency arises, I am to call 911, child protective services, or a mental health hotline.

I understand copies of all correspondence from either parent to the Parenting Coordinator must be mailed, emailed, or faxed to the other parent on the same date the information is submitted to the Parenting Coordinator, with "cc:" noted on the correspondence, unless otherwise specifically addressed per correspondence by the Parenting Coordinator.

I understand I may not at any time during or after the Parenting Coordination, call the Parenting Coordinator as a witness in any legal or administrative proceeding concerning this dispute. To the extent that I may have a right to call the Parenting Coordinator as a witness, that right is hereby waived.

I agree not to subpoena or demand the production of any records, notes, work product or the like of the Parenting Coordinator in any legal or administrative proceeding concerning this dispute. To the extent that I may have a legal right to demand these documents, that right is hereby waived. If, at a later time, either party decides to subpoena the Parenting Coordinator, the Parenting Coordinator will move to quash the subpoena. That party agrees to reimburse the Parenting Coordinator for whatever expenses she/he incurs in such an action including but not limited to the Parenting Coordinators time at a rate of \$150.00 per hour.

The exceptions to the above confidentiality provisions include: (1) This agreement to utilize Parenting Coordination services and any written agreement made and signed by the parties as a result of Parenting Coordination may be used in any relevant proceeding, unless the parties make agreement not to do so; (2) Matters that are admissible in a court of law continue to be admissible even though raised in a Parenting Coordination session.

I understand that the Parenting Coordinator does not offer legal advice or offer legal counsel, and that I am advised to consult with attorneys in order to be properly counseled about my legal interests, rights and responsibilities.

I understand I am to notify the Parenting Coordinator in writing within 24 hours of any changes in my contact information, legal representation, residency, or occupants of my home.

I understand that we may make joint parenting decisions in our child(ren)'s best interests at any time without the Parenting Coordinator's assistance. I will notice the Parenting Coordinator of any significant agreements reached with the other parent outside of the Parenting Coordination process.

I the undersigned and with regard to my children, agree to retain Parenting Partnerships, Inc. as Parenting Coordinator for service and conditions as described above.

My signature reflects that I will abide by all conditions outlined in this document.

Parent Signature: _____ Date: _____

Witness Signature: _____ Date: _____