



Parent Coordinator Information and Referral Information Form

Parenting Coordinator.

In high-conflict separations or divorces, parenting issues may arise with greater frequency that continue to bring parents back to Court for resolution. This strategy is both untimely and expensive. An alternate strategy to manage such disputes as they arise is through the use of a Parenting Coordinator.

A Parenting Coordinator is a neutral person to whom parents can turn when in dispute on matters relating to the children. Parents may access the service of a Parenting Coordinator in a more timely fashion and costs are almost always less than going to Court, but this is not a guarantee.

The role of the Parenting Coordinator is to help parents to come to a successful resolution between themselves. However, the Parenting Coordinator is also empowered by the parents, their Parenting Plan Agreement or by Court Order, to make recommendations binding on the parents in the event the parents are unable to agree on solutions. In other words, the decision of the Parenting Coordinator must be followed by the parents, as if ordered by a Court.

With regard to costs associated with the Parenting Coordinator service specifically, parents typically divide these costs equally unless there is a prior agreement to do otherwise or unless there is an Order of the Court specifying how costs are to be distributed between the parties. The matter of distribution of costs must be determined by the parents, lawyers or Courts, prior to referral.

As of April 30, 2008, there are new rules governing the provision of the Parenting Coordination service in the Province of Ontario. Those new rules require the parties to obtain independent legal advice prior to service and also require the Parenting Coordinator to screen the parties for domestic violence and power imbalances prior to service. These matters will be discussed at the time of referral. Furthermore, the new rules require the Parenting Coordinator to have been trained in screening procedures for domestic violence and power imbalances as well as having received training in family law. I have received all such mandatory training, in compliance with the laws of Ontario.

Referral and service process:

1. A lawyer for either party must initiate contact for the purpose of referral. If one parent calls, then the other parent may consider the PC biased in favour the caller and this can undermine service. Hence the referral must come from the lawyer.
2. Please note, there can be considerable time and activity establishing the terms of service during the referral stage for the Parenting Coordinator service. These activities may include phone calls, faxes, emails, reading of information and/or meetings and/or other activities between lawyers representing the parents, the parents themselves, and the intended Parenting Coordinator. These activities will be accounted and billed for during the referral stage and will be billed either to the referring party or both parties jointly as will be determined at the time of the initial phone call. This account will be due regardless of whether the referral results in the actual Parenting Coordination Service. A retainer may be required to cover costs during the referral process.
3. Assuming service, a retainer will be determined and the parents will forward payment accordingly in advance of any further activity commencing by the Parenting Coordinator. Please note, parents

must obtain independent legal advice regarding the Parenting Coordinator Agreement, sign the agreement, attach a Certificate of Independent Legal Advice obtained from their lawyer and provide these materials with retainer to the Parenting Coordinator. Thereafter, the parents or their lawyers provide pertinent reports such as found in the pleadings brief and which can include affidavit material, reports of CAS involvement, prior assessments, etc. These would be read prior to setting meetings.

4. The Parenting Coordinator then meets with the parents separately and will screen for domestic violence and power imbalances. Thereafter, the Parenting Coordinator will meet with the parents either together or separately to get acquainted and to learn about the parents, their family histories, the children and current issues. During these meetings parents may provide signed consent permitting the Parenting Coordinator to gather information from other service providers relevant to their situation. These meetings are scheduled for 3 hours duration.
5. If the children are at least 3 years-of-age or otherwise at the Parenting Coordinator's discretion, the Parenting Coordinator will then meet with the children, usually twice. On one occasion mother would bring them and on the other father would bring them. It is important for the Parenting Coordinator to chat with the children, to hear first hand their perception of issues. Often, children in high-conflict divorce situations have met with other service providers. It is not sufficient that the Parenting Coordinator only speak to these past or ongoing helpers. The Parenting Coordinator must meet with the children too.
6. Lastly, the Parenting Coordinator may meet with both parents together in a joint session wherein issues of concern are discussed. If there is sufficient cause or reason that the parents cannot be seen together, alternate arrangements may be made, appropriate to the circumstances at the discretion of the Parenting Coordinator. If matters cannot be resolved through discussion, then either party or the Parenting Coordinator may call an impasse and move the matter to be settled on the decision of the Parenting Coordinator.
7. On an ongoing basis thereafter, issues of concern may be brought to the parenting coordinator for resolution. Ongoing meetings and other sources of information required to assist in settling disputes or coming to a recommendation, would be at the Parenting Coordinator's discretion, taking into account the input of the parents.
8. This process is identified in greater detail in the Parenting Coordinator Agreement form.

Costs and payment:

1. This service is provided as per the fee schedule set out on my website, plus GST.
2. Parents will be billed for any time spent by the Parenting Coordinator on any activity related to the referral and a retainer may be requested to cover costs during the referral period.
3. Assuming service, parents will provide a retainer based upon 20 hours of service as per the fee schedule, prior to the delivery of service. In the event the process takes less time than estimated, the balance will be returned. In the event the process takes longer, parents will be billed accordingly and payment will be due upon receipt or parents may be asked to increase the retainer as service continues. Failure to pay may result in service delay or termination.

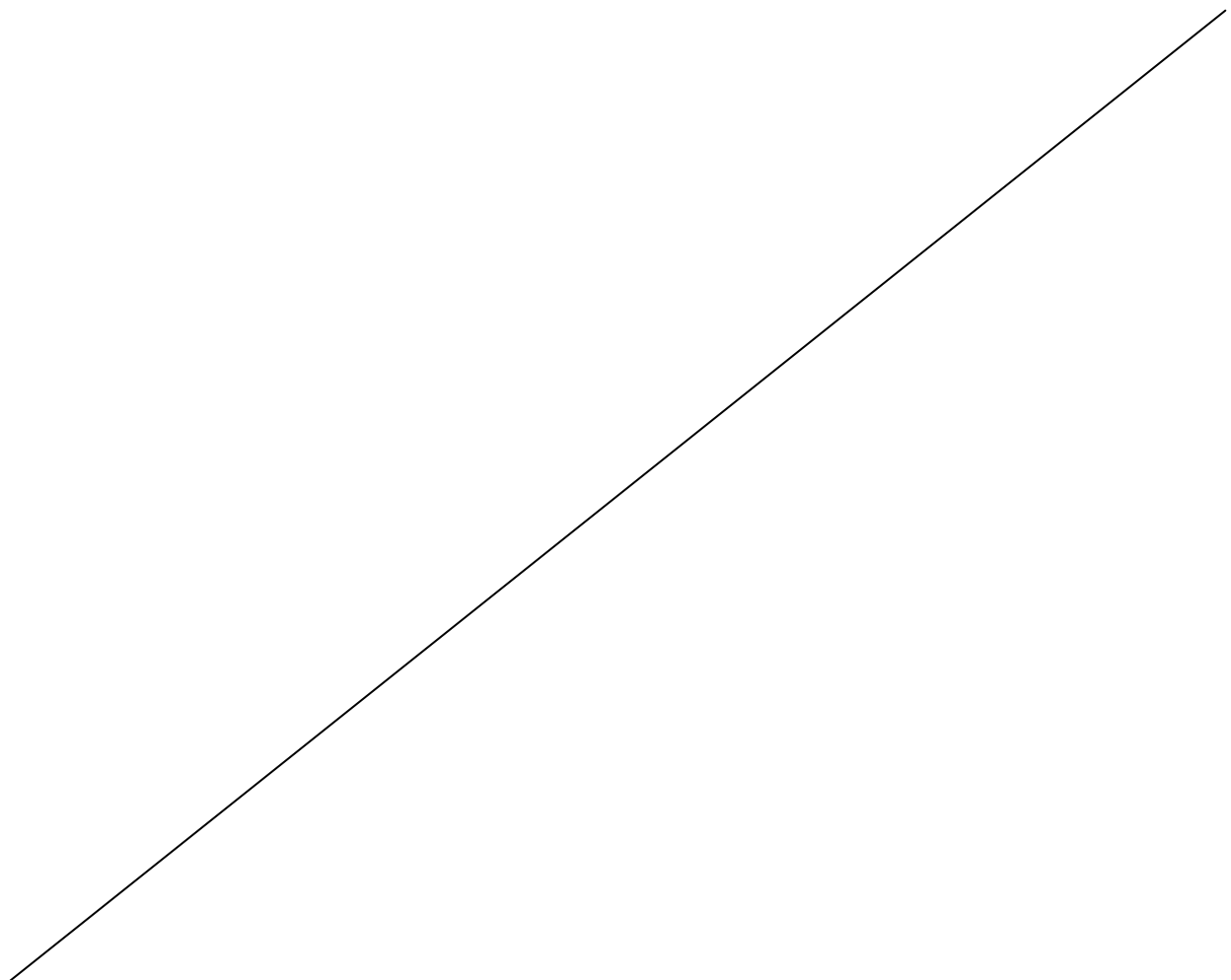
Parenting Coordinator Agreement

Changes to the Arbitration Act necessitate a lengthy agreement that identifies the terms of service and respective responsibilities of parents and service provider. If you are interested in this service, both parents must print and read the Parent Coordinator Agreement accessible with the link below, discuss it with their lawyers and provide a certificate of Independent Legal Advice.

To initiate a referral for service, the Referral Information Form below MUST be completed and the Parent Coordinator Agreement must be signed and WITNESSED BY YOUR LAWER from whom you MUST obtain Independent Legal Advice.

To obtain the Parent Coordinator Agreement go to:

http://www.yoursocialworker.com/s-articles/Parent_Coordination_Agreement-March-09.pdf



Referral Information

Name and phone number of person completing this form: _____

Lawyer Information	Lawyer for Mother	Lawyer for Father
Name		
Address		
City		
Province		
Postal Code		
Telephone		
Fax		
Email		

Parent Information	Mother	Father
Name		
Address		
City		
Province		
Postal Code		
Telephone		
Email		

Child's Name	Date of Birth	Current Age

Please circle yes or no

Do you have a Parenting Plan?	Yes	No
Is there a Separation Agreement?	Yes	No
Is there a Court Order in effect?	Yes	No
Has an assessment been conducted?	Yes	No
Have criminal charges been laid against either parent?	Yes	No
Has either parent been convicted of a criminal offence?	Yes	No

Please append a copy existing agreements, Court Orders, assessments, bail notices or conviction notices to this form.

Reason for Referral:

Current residential schedule:

Key: Use "M" for Mother and "F" for Father

Week 1	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Morning							
Afternoon							
Evening							
Night							

Week 2	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Morning							
Afternoon							
Evening							
Night							

Description:

Location of pick-ups: _____

Location of drop-offs: _____

Transportation arrangements for the children between the parents are as follows:

Description of current custody agreement:

Description of current holiday agreements:

Description of current school arrangements:

Description of any restraining orders, bail or parole conditions currently in effect:

Brief description of current issues:

Completed by: _____

Date: _____