

PARENTING COORDINATION AGREEMENT

Keirsten J. Roath, MSW, LCSW

This agreement shall be a binding contract between the Parenting Coordinator and the undersigned individuals.

1. Parenting Coordinator's role: Parenting coordination is an intervention designed to help a family deal with potentially disruptive conflict. Parenting coordination involves a conflict manager, called the Parenting Coordinator, or PC for short. The PC is assigned by the Court or by stipulation through the Court. The PC facilitates effective communication and conflict resolution between the parents, so that issues get resolved in a timely and child-focused manner. The PC's ultimate goal is to help the parents develop an effective co-parenting relationship that attends to the needs of their child(ren).

The PC can help the family deal with a variety of issues. Commonly, the PC deals with disputes about parenting time, telephone access, transportation of the child(ren), child care, parenting issues, exchange of information issues, and the children's social, emotional, academic, and medical needs.

2. Scheduled Meetings: Generally speaking, individual sessions 60 minutes in length will be scheduled with each parent to gather background information and to allow each parent to share their concerns, thoughts and goals for Parenting Coordination. Additionally, the PC prefers to meet with each child individually to hear their opinion of the situation and to assess the level of conflict they are experiencing. The majority of sessions will then be 90-minute joint sessions with both parents. Meetings are initially scheduled weekly or bi-monthly according to the needs of your family. After the resolution of initial concerns, meetings may then be scheduled on an as needed basis. Meetings may be scheduled at the request of either parent or the PC.

The PC chooses who participates in the meetings depending on the needs of your family. In addition to the parents and the children, the PC may meet with the step-parents who may be a relevant source of information or a potential resource for resolving the issues presented by the family. The PC may choose to meet with such persons individually, in pairs, or in small groups.

3. Sharing Information with the PC: Ideally, the parents should submit their issues to be discussed to the PC in writing at least 48 hours ahead of the scheduled parenting coordination meeting. It can be faxed, mailed via the U.S. Mail or sent through email. Parents should try to specifically identify in these communications what is at issue, their position and the reasons for their position.

Parents should first try to resolve the issues on their own, before they submit the issues for parenting coordination. Unless otherwise specified by the PC, parents should send a copy to the other parent of what they submit to the PC, so that both parents and the PC may be as prepared as possible to have a productive meeting.

4. Confidentiality and Communications by the PC: Unlike psychotherapy and mediation, parenting coordination is not a confidential process. However, you will be asked to complete a release form with names and numbers of persons with whom the PC may need to speak to provide the most comprehensive, informed service. The PC will not discuss your case with anyone other than those listed on the release of information unless mandated by the judge or ethics board. Exceptions to confidentiality include, but are not limited to: (a) mandated reporting of suspected child and elder

abuse and or neglect; (b) that either parent or another person is in danger of bodily harm; and (c) that the PC has learned of the intent to commit a felony.

5. Avoiding Potential Breach of Confidentiality as Limited Above:

- a) The parent coordinator may need to leave you a voice message or contact you by other means regarding scheduling matters. Please indicate exactly which ways you prefer to receive messages including phone numbers:

_____ Telephone: _____

_____ OK for voice message _____ OK for message with person

_____ Email: _____

_____ Fax: _____

- b) In regard to accidental meetings in public, the PC will take their lead from you meet. Unless you acknowledge the PC, they will not acknowledge you in order to maintain your anonymity.

6. Fees and Billing: Since parent coordination is not considered therapy, your intake and joint sessions are not eligible for third party reimbursement. The PC’s time is billed at \$130 per hour for all services including office sessions for any and all parties, reviewing documents and correspondences, deliberating and issuing written communications, traveling to and testifying in court, and communicating with the parents, their attorneys, or others via telephone and/or email. Likewise, if one parent insists that the PC read extensive reports, faxes, or listen to audiotapes and the PC agrees, this parent alone will pay for the time involved. In the case of court testimony, the party who requests the PC’s participation shall cover the entire cost of the PC’s time.

Unless the PC is provided with a certified copy of a court order that states otherwise, the costs for joint PC services will be equally divided between the parents, with the exception of individual sessions that are the sole responsibility of each parent. Parties are expected to pay for services at the time services are provided with cash or check. Invoices will be provided monthly for any remaining balance and for additional services provided outside of sessions. If your account is left unpaid after termination and it goes to a collection agency, you will be responsible for any legal fees to obtain the unpaid balance. Non-payment of fees shall be grounds for the resignation of the PC.

Your appointments have secured your time. This applies to individual appointments as well as joint appointments. If you cancel a joint session, it is expected that you will cancel with the parent coordinator and your co-parent within 24 hours of the scheduled session. If you do not provide 24 hour notice or if you neglect to inform the co-parent, you will be responsible for the full charge to both parents. Even if your co-parent is responsible for the full fee of each session, you will be 100% responsible for any late cancellation fees, “no show” fees, and sanctions for inappropriate session behavior at the PC’s discretion. The PC reserves the right to assess costs differently or disproportionately.

7. Telephone Contact: All telephone contact initiated by a parent should be limited. Only emergency calls and change of appointment calls will be returned. An emergency is defined as any situation that endangers the child(ren) emotionally or physically. In order to remain objective, the PC must maintain an attitude of open-mindedness and objectivity. The PC must be able to have the freedom to view a situation free from fixed preconceptions, biases and expectations. Therefore, telephone consultations, which leave out the other parent, will be at the discretion of the Parent Coordinator. Parents are discouraged from calling the PC as a replacement for problem-solving and conflict resolution between parents. Letter writing/emailing used in this way is also discouraged.

8. Rule Adjustments: This contract cannot cover all the particulars that may arise in every situation. The parents agree that the PC may establish new rules and guidelines to fit their unique situation. The fundamental principles governing all rules and guidelines are: (a) conflict for the parents will be minimized, and (b) decisions will be made in the best interests of the child(ren).

9. Term: Generally, the term of the PC's service shall be a period of 24 months from the date of execution of this contract. The service of the PC may be terminated prior to the end of the term if both parents agree to do so or if the PC requests to withdraw prior to the termination date. The PC's service may be renewed, if necessary, by the same process it was initiated.

10. Parents' Responsibilities: In addition to abiding by the other terms and procedures outlined in this contract, the parents shall make every effort to resolve their issues and disputes with each other in good faith and in a respectful, cooperative, and mutually acceptable manner. Their focus shall be the best interests of their child(ren), rather than their own needs and wishes, including any wishes to "win" the dispute or remain involved with the other parent.

The parents shall at all times attempt to learn and employ advice from the PC in order to improve their communication and co-parenting. Parents shall come to meetings with necessary releases and otherwise arrange for and expedite communication of all relevant information to the PC. In some cases, this may entail the parents paying for the services of other professionals (such as a physician, in the case of a medical dispute) to provide expert input to the decision-making process.

11. Complaint Process: If either parent has a complaint about the PC, he/she shall bring the complaint directly to the PC for resolution before taking any other action. Neither parent shall complain about the PC to the licensing board without first meeting and conferring with the PC in an effort to resolve the grievance. In the event that no resolution is reached, the parents and the PC shall attend a judicially supervised settlement conference on the Court's regularly scheduled settlement conference calendar prior to any other action being taken. The Court shall reserve jurisdiction to determine whether either or both parties and/or the PC shall ultimately be responsible for any portion of the time and cost the PC spent responding to any grievance, including the PC's attorney fees, if any. If a parent files a complaint about the PC to the PC's licensing board that is later dismissed, he/she will pay the bill for any time the PC spends defending against the complaint, as well as any legal fees.

12. Court Order Supercedes: Where aspects of this contract differ from the provisions of a court order pertaining to the service of the PC, the provisions of the Court shall prevail and shall be followed. If a court appointment is in effect and the PC or the parents wish to terminate the services of the PC, it shall be the responsibilities of the parents to have the court vacate the appointment. If one

parent wishes to terminate the services of the PC and the other does not agree, an order of the Court is required to remove the PC.

13. . **Peer Consultation:** The PC may participate in peer consultation or receive feedback and support from a mentor in the process of fulfilling the PC role. The purpose of such professional consultation is to support high quality service delivery by the PC.

13. Identity of the Parenting Coordinator: The Parenting Coordinator in this case is Keirsten J. Roath, MSW, LCSW.

14. Identity of the Children: The children covered by this agreement and their dates of birth are:

15. Attestation and Informed Consent: I have read and understand the above Agreement and agree to abide by its terms.

Signature

Signature

Printed Name

Printed Name

Date Signed

Date Signed

Relationship to the Children Above

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