

What services can a parenting coordinator provide?

As a parenting coordinator, Katie Arthurs, serves a myriad of roles to help parents co-parent. Katie's duties can be altered to fit a family's needs. She can perform the following services:

- (1) **Case Management:** A parenting coordinator acts as the liaison between the parties, counsel, professionals, and other service providers to keep the family organized, working towards common goals, and on-track to avoid future disputes.

Katie understands the needs of the children and can make professional recommendations. She can also coordinate services for the children, including ensuring that the children and parents attend counseling; both parents have access to school calendars and records; and neither parent is withholding parenting time or information from the other parent. Katie helps parents obtain information without direct contact from the other parents. She can also monitor compliance with the parenting plan to ensure successful transitioning.

- (2) **Education / Coaching:** A parenting coordinator helps parents understand and appreciate their new roles and duties under a parenting plan.

Katie assists parents in understanding a child's development, and how to operate in a single-parent home. She helps families set boundaries to ensure that the child has a healthy upbringing. Katie coaches parents to develop skills to allow the family to adapt to new circumstances. She provides encouragement, guidance, and empathy to parents who need the support to get through a difficult family time.

- (3) **Conflict Management / Problem Solving / Facilitated Negotiations:** When a conflict arises, a parenting coordinator works with the parents to problem solve creative solutions.

Katie uses a wide range of conflict resolution strategies to enable the parties to make decisions for their children. With the help of a parenting coordinator, the parents focus on communication and priorities to manage conflict. As a result, the parents become equipped to eventually resolve day-to-day issues on their own.

- (4) **Decision Making:** If the parents cannot reach an agreement, a parenting coordinator has the authority to render decisions, as a last resort.

Katie will submit a written recommendation to the court, if the parties cannot agree upon the submitted issue. The parents maintain the right to object to that decision. Katie's authority does not extend to changes in custody, regular parenting time schedules, or child support.

What can a parenting coordinator do?

The parenting coordinator agreement is tailored to a family's specific needs. The following issues can be assigned to a parenting coordinator:

- Minor changes to the parenting time schedule including vacation, holidays, or a brief variation for one parent needing additional time for a special event
- Transitioning the children including date, time, place, transportation
- Health care management
- Child rearing and day-to-day decision making
- Managing mental health or counseling
- Monitoring psychological testing or other assessment for children and parents
- Education or daycare or school choice, tutoring, summer school, special education testing, and advanced placement
- Scheduling of extracurricular activities including camps and jobs
- Religious observance and education
- Children's travel and passport arrangements
- Exchanging clothing, equipment, and child's personal belongings
- Communication between parents about the child by telephone, email, notes in backpack
- Altering child's appearance including haircuts, tattoos, piercings
- Role of and contact with significant others and extended families
- Substance abuse assessments and testing for either or both parents or a child, including access to results
- Parenting classes for either or both parents

What are the benefits of a parenting coordinator for parents?

Parenting coordination is designed to help a family co-parent in separate households. A parenting coordinator assists parents by bridging the gap between the parents' differences. The process helps reduce a child's stress that results from the parental conflict by creating an optimal home environment.

A parenting coordinator also encourages parents to shy away from court when issues arise by providing them an opportunity to find resolutions that will not negatively affect them, both emotionally and financially. The cost is shared between the parties and less expensive than hiring lawyers to negotiate disagreements or challenges that may arise.

What are the benefits of a parenting coordinator for children?

Parenting coordination provides parents a healthy mechanism to work through issues to achieve a successful implementation of their parenting plan. Children are thereby shielded from the exposure of disagreements, which can put them at risk for social, academic, and mental health problems. Parenting coordination promotes the children's optimum adjustment and increases the likelihood of keeping both parents active in the children's lives.

What are the benefits of a parenting coordinator for the legal community?

It becomes both tedious and inefficient for lawyers to manage all post-divorce disputes. By appointing a parenting coordinator, lawyers can deflect issues to a designated professional who will handle the conflict with the parents directly. This process saves time for the lawyers and saves money for the clients. While all family issues are important, some issues do not rise to the need for a lawyer or court. The lawyer can focus on the legal issues, while the parenting coordinator can focus on case management and implementation of the parenting plan.