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PARENTING EVALUATION IN A LEGAL SETTING

So you know what will happen during the evaluation, here are the steps we will ask you to follow. This step-by-step plan will help Dr. Bailey make fair recommendations about the best interests of your children.

Please feel free to provide any information about your case between meetings with the evaluator. Always write down what you want the evaluator to know and e-mail or mail the information to the evaluator. Any e-mail received by you should be forwarded to all of the parties. If it is not forwarded to all of the parties, the evaluator will respond to your e-mail with a copy of your e-mail to all parties. **Dr. Bailey will only be using email contact during this evaluation, including legal counsel for either party. If any party contact Dr. Bailey by phone, he will respond via email and answer all necessary questions.**

BEFORE THE EVALUATION BEGINS

1. Each parent must agree to the evaluation. There must be a court order and a letter from your lawyer that includes the following information (your lawyer will tell you about this):
 - i. The purposes for this evaluation.
 - ii. Your concerns about the current care of your children.
 - iii. Your e-mail address, address and phone numbers.
 - iv. Your net worth and net annual income so that a sliding fee can be set.
2. The evaluation fee is split into two payments. The first of the two payments is required before the evaluation can begin. This first fee of \$100 per parent is for the first contact with the evaluation process. It covers sending the **Parenting History Survey** (questions related to your concerns about the care of your children) and the disclosure forms (this form and the **Agreement to Parenting Evaluation**).
3. When both parties (parents) pay the first payment, the court order and the letter from the lawyers about the issues in the case are given to Dr. Bailey, and the parties have reviewed the disclosure documents about the evaluation with their lawyers, then, the **Parenting History Survey (PHS)** will be sent.
4. A final evaluation report should be completed in eight weeks. The eight-week time clock starts when Dr. Bailey sees each of the parties at their separate first appointments. The first interview appointment will be made when Dr. Bailey receives the completed Parenting History Survey (PHS) from all parties.

PREPARING FOR THE FIRST INTERVIEW

The first appointment with you will take up to four hours. To lessen stress, your appointment will be set for a different day than the other parent's. Steps 5 and 6 describe what you need to prepare for this appointment.

5. Please bring the balance of the evaluation fee at this time. The amount of the fee will be set as a sliding fee based on your net worth and net income. You will know the amount ahead of the interview. It is in the **Agreement to Parenting Evaluation**, in the e-mail that was sent to your lawyers, and in the letter that came with your PHS. If you do not pay the fee we will have to cancel the appointment. This will delay the evaluation. The evaluator will have to tell the court and both lawyers about the delay. They will decide if the evaluation should go on.
6. At the first appointment, you should bring anything written about the concerns you have about the other party. **Please *star * or highlight the parts of these papers that you think are important.** In the papers, please jot down some hand written notes that show why you think the starred or highlighted section is so important. **Only include records from people who have directly seen parenting or other upsetting actions that may not be good for your children.**

AT THE FIRST INTERVIEW

7. During the first meeting you will sign the **Agreement to Parenting Evaluation**. Please make sure you talk with your lawyer about this evaluation. If you do not sign the agreement, the interview will stop. The evaluator must tell the judge and both lawyers about this delay. Then, they decide if the evaluation should go on.
8. Once you sign the Agreement, psychological testing will occur.
9. Next, is a very detailed interview.
10. After the detailed interview, you will sign release of information forms. These give Dr. Bailey permission to talk to people who may have seen the other parent's or your parenting firsthand or who have first hand thoughts about other concerns.
11. If you would like us to talk to someone involved with your family who is not a professional, that person must give Dr. Bailey a legal statement, called a "declaration." Your lawyer can show the form the declaration takes so that you can go get the declarations. This is a detailed statement from the witness about parenting actions or actions that concern you about the care of your children.
12. Both parents will also bring records to the first interview. These records could be from: police evaluation reports, criminal evaluation reports, juvenile court records, mental health records, medical records, school attendance and evaluation report cards, standardized testing records, social services agency records, and psychological and

educational testing evaluation reports, etc. **Please *star * or highlight the parts of the records that you think are important. Also, please write a brief note in the margin about why you think each part is important.** Each parent must give the evaluator permission to talk with the professionals who have control over these records. The parents must ask each professional or agency to mail the full records directly to the evaluator. Both parents will have two weeks to get all of the records. If the evaluator does not get these records, both lawyers will learn about this delay. Then, if either parent still fails to get the records, the evaluation stops. The judge will be told, and the evaluation will not continue until the records are sent.

13. At the end of the first interview, you will get “allegation forms” to take home. Please fill out one of these forms for each concern about your children. Each concern should include three examples on three separate forms. The evaluator will use one of your concerns to show you how to fill out these forms. You will have one week to return them. If either parent is slow in completing the forms, both lawyers will be told. Then, if either parent still does not get the forms back to the evaluator, the judge will be told. The evaluation will not continue until the forms are returned.
14. At the end of the interview, you will schedule a time when the evaluator can watch you and your children playing or talking together. The evaluator will ask you to come to the office “ready to play with your children” or “ready to talk with your children” for about an hour.
15. If you have a new partner (boyfriend or girlfriend) who is involved with the children, she or he must also take the MMPI–2 and may be interviewed. The evaluator will let you know when this will occur.
16. A report of the first interview will be sent to you so that you can add information that might be used. Also, once you return the allegation forms, they will be written up as part of the evaluation report. The evaluator will send these back to you so that you can add information that might be used.

YOUR CHILDREN AND YOU TOGETHER

17. The play time or time to talk with your children will occur on separate days with each parent to lessen stress.
18. At the end of the parent–child session, you will schedule a final interview with the evaluator.
19. The evaluator will write a draft of the evaluation report before professionals or other people are contacted or any records are reviewed. This draft will include the evaluator’s first thoughts about the concerns of both parties. This is done so that the evaluator’s thoughts are formed just from contact with your family. Dr. Bailey wants you to feel the evaluation process is fair.

REVIEW OF RECORDS AND INTERVIEWS WITH OTHERS

20. The evaluator will review all records given by the parents.
21. Other people will be interviewed. A written summary of the interviews will be sent to each person interviewed so that they can add information that might be used. If any person delays being interviewed, the evaluator will tell both lawyers about this delay.

CLOSING INTERVIEWS

22. We do not usually talk with young children. We do not ask children about where they want to live. We do not ask children when or if they want to visit their parents. This is to protect the child from feeling guilty about what happens. Children should not feel caught in the middle of any parent fight.
23. Sometimes, teenagers could be interviewed individually. This happens the hour before the last interview of one of the parents. This helps your child avoid being blamed or feeling bad for the results of the evaluation.
24. If a parent has a new partner (boyfriend or girlfriend) who is involved with the children, that new person will be interviewed an hour before the last interview of their partner.
25. The last interview will be done in two parts. The first part is for clearing up any details that are missing. The second part will let each parent know about the results of the evaluation that are about the parent. The parent can talk about these results with the evaluator so that the parent is not surprised by the results and has a chance to understand them. No result or finding is possible unless several facts from different sources support the finding.

ATTORNEY AND/ OR GUARDIAN *AD LITEM* MEETING

26. At a meeting with the lawyers and the guardian ad litem, (if one is appointed), the evaluator will go over the final evaluation report. The parents do not attend this meeting. The lawyers of both parents must attend.
27. Each lawyer can ask questions about the evaluation report. Both lawyers will get a copy of the final report.

IF TRIAL IS GOING TO OCCUR

If the evaluator is to be an expert witness during a deposition or trial because the two lawyers in your case cannot work out a settlement, then an additional advance fee will be required as described in the Agreement to Parenting Evaluation.