

Parenting Coordinator Information Sheet

Why do we have a Parenting Coordinator?

You and your co-parent have agreed or have been ordered to use my services as a Parenting Coordinator. A Parenting Coordinator is a mental health professional with whom you consult about parenting issues. The Parenting Coordinator will help you consider options and will make recommendations about the resolution of parenting questions to further the best interests of your child. A Parenting Coordinator is appointed in order to provide a way to decrease the need to return to court, as well as to shorten the response time to solve difficulties involving children.

What is a Parenting Coordinator?

The Parenting Coordinator's role is to consult with the parties and make recommendations directly to the parents about how the children's interests can best be served. The role of the Parenting Coordinator is like that of the Mediator in that the Parenting Coordinator seeks to elicit cooperation and agreement between the parents. Using his or her expertise in child development, however, the Parenting Coordinator also, after hearing the parents' perceptions and thoughts, offers advice and guidance with regard to specific decisions. With the help of the Parenting Coordinator, the parents may also create or modify their own Parenting Plan for the children.

What is the Parenting Coordinator authorized to do?

Your court order (if any) will outline my authority and will be referred to throughout our work together. In *general*, I am authorized to make suggestions about parenting practices that will benefit the children.

How often do we see the Parenting Coordinator?

Initially, I will schedule appointments with both parents (separately and together). Please do not bring children to your initial appointment. The scheduling of subsequent appointments is determined by the needs that you present. In some ways, the frequency of appointments with me is up to you. The more you and your co-parent are able to come to a decision on your own, the less you will need to see me. However, when a problem occurs which you and your co-parent cannot successfully solve, you will need to make an appointment with me. If concerns arise that the other parent is not complying with a court order (e.g. a parent is refusing to allow visitation, a parent is not sharing medical information, etc.) then you will need to make an appointment with me. If I receive information about your case from sources other than the co-parents that I would like to investigate, you will be given instructions to make an appointment with me. *Either parent can request an appointment for any issue.* While I usually discuss issues with both parents present (either in person or via email) there are times when it is preferred to caucus privately with one parent (usually when it seems useful to reduce conflict, or gain cooperation). It is sometimes useful to meet your children and discuss their perceptions of their households and challenges, however, this is to inform the process of helping the parents, and not about direct intervention with the children. Please refer to the Parenting Coordinator Services Procedures Agreement to understand my policies and expectations in full.

Some issues can be discussed and resolved via email, and this is often a more economical and timely

approach. I encourage parents to communicate with each other via email about parent-time issues, as it creates a record of what was discussed and what agreements were made. It also allows me to review and comment on the qualitative aspects of co-parent communication, which often is central to co-parent cooperation of conflict.

To whom does the Parenting Coordinator report?

Primarily, I will interact with the parents, and make recommendations about disputed issues. At times I may report about your case directly to the Court, to your attorneys or to the Guardian Ad Litem, if one is involved. Further, I communicate with other professionals who have a need to know, such as therapists, physicians, and custody/visitation evaluators, if any. There is no confidentiality when using a Parenting Coordinator. Anything you say or do can be reported to the other parent, Court or other involved professionals.

Who pays for the Parenting Coordinator?

Parenting coordinator services are paid by the parents. Typically, parents split the cost in some fashion determined by the parents. If parenting coordination is court ordered, the court order will specify the cost sharing for my charges. I require each parent to keep a valid credit card on file to bring their account current as described in the fee agreement.

What are the payment arrangements?

I require a \$1000 initial retainer which is replenished periodically to restore a \$500 balance to work from. I bill \$165.00 per hour (prorated to the minute) for all parenting coordinator activities (e.g., parent or child meetings, reviewing or writing emails, reviewing orders, decrees or other documents, writing reports, consultation with attorneys or other involved professionals, reviewing the file). I charge \$225.00 per hour for appearance in court or for deposition. Court and deposition costs are to be paid at the time of subpoena or scheduling. Parenting Coordinator services cannot be billed to your health insurance policy. At the close of our work together, I will remit any unused retainer to you.

If you break an appointment or if you do not cancel an appointment within twenty-four hours, you will be charged for the scheduled time. If you do not cancel any court or deposition appearance by me within two business days, you will be charged for my scheduled time. If one party is responsible for a late cancellation or a broken appointment, I will bill both parties as usual, but I will note on the statement who is responsible for the broken appointment. Please refer to your financial contract for more detail.

When are we finished with the Parenting Coordinator?

If I am appointed by the court to serve as the parenting coordinator in your case I will remain in this role until the judge releases me.

Is this a confidential process?

No. If I am court appointed, anything that you say or do can be reported to the Court. Further, while I will try to keep your private matters from public display, I reserve the right to discuss your case with other involved professionals. I reserve the option to withhold information obtained from your children if requested by the children or if I believe sharing the information could harm the relationship between parent and child. I reserve the option of not sharing communications from one parent with the other parent, particularly if I believe it would have the effect of increasing conflict.

Parenting coordinator vs. special master

Parenting coordination is appropriate for parents who can benefit from guidance about communication and parenting practices and would like to lower the level of conflict between parents. For those families who have more entrenched conflict and animosity, having a special master appointed may be a better option. A special master does many of the functions of a parenting coordinator, but also has the authority to resolve disputes with directives that have the force of a court order. If both parents agree to using a special master, you can ask the court to appoint me as the special master.

I hope that the use of a Parenting Coordinator can help you and your co-parent find a way to bring peace to your family. This process works and I am confident that it can work for you too. I look forward to meeting you.

Sincerely,

Chris Wehl, Ph.D.
Clinical Psychologist
Parenting Coordinator

Parenting Coordinator Services Agreement

1. This agreement is between Chris Wehl, Ph.D. and _____ (parent).
2. I have read the information sheet: **Parenting Coordinator Information Sheet** provided to me by Dr. Wehl.
3. I understand that Dr. Wehl will usually meet with the parents together. Dr. Wehl may also:
 - a. Interview children without parents present
 - b. Review any custody, visitation, parenting and psychological evaluations pertinent to the case
 - c. Review relevant medical and mental health records of all parties
 - d. Review relevant court documents.
4. I understand that if there is a court order or stipulated agreement, it will set Dr. Wehl's specific authority.
5. I understand the Dr. Wehl may communicate with evaluators, therapists and other professionals involved, in addition to any reporting requirements ordered by the Court.
6. I understand that there is no confidentiality guarantee for any party using Parenting Coordinator services. I know that all information obtained by the Parenting Coordinator, may be shared with other participants without further authorization, and that the Parenting Coordinator may also share information with other involved professionals in this matter, to further the best interests of the children in this case.
7. I understand that all allegations of child abuse or neglect will be taken seriously and may result in referral to the Division of Child and Family Services, as appropriate or required by law.
8. I understand the Parenting Coordinator Financial Agreement provided by Dr. Wehl and have signed this agreement.
9. I understand that in the event of a deposition or trial, prior to Dr. Wehl's providing information or appearing at a deposition or at court, all outstanding charges must be paid, and appropriate fees must be paid in advance as outlined in the **Parenting Coordinator Financial Policy and Agreement**. The party calling Dr. Wehl will prepay for his time, with apportionment of the fees to be decided by court.
10. I understand that either parent may opt to pay the other parent's charges in order to keep the parenting coordinator from suspending services for account delinquency.
11. I understand that throughout the use of Parenting Coordinator services, Dr. Wehl may choose not to disclose information directly to me that my children provide to him in confidence.
12. I understand that once begun, Parenting Coordinator services can continue for an unspecified period of time. I understand that there may be times when Parenting Coordinator services are not needed and when I do not have a need to consult the Parenting Coordinator for a period of weeks or months.
13. I understand that termination of Dr. Wehl's parenting coordinator services can be accomplished at the request of both parents, unless there is a court order that prevents this.

I have read the above, had the opportunity to discuss all of the provisions with my attorney, and I agree to utilize Parenting Coordinator services under these conditions.

Date

Signature of Parent

**Financial Policy and Agreement
For Parenting Coordinator Services**
(one for each financially responsible party)

FEES

The fee for Parenting Coordinator Services is \$165 per hour¹, and is billed for all the time required in activities related to the case. This includes, but is not limited to interviews, meetings, telephone calls, email communication, report preparation, record review, consulting with attorneys or other professionals, missed appointments or late cancellations, and required travel. Appearance in court or at deposition is billed at \$225 per hour, to be paid at the time of subpoena or scheduling. Appearance usually requires 2-3 hours of preparation in addition to the time away from the office for appearance. Advance payment for court appearance or deposition must accompany subpoena or request to appear and should be for a half day at a minimum (3 hours plus 4 hours) unless it is anticipated that a full day will be required, (3 hours plus 8 hours). Unused amounts will be refunded. Copying of file documents is done at 50 cents per page.

PAYMENT

To initiate a case, I require a \$1000 deposit, apportioned as agreed by the parents or as directed in the order of appointment. When the account falls below \$500, an amount sufficient to replenish a \$500 balance will be required to continue Parenting Coordinator Services. **I require a valid credit card to be held on file to bring accounts current if other payment has not been made 15 days after receiving a statement.** No further appointments will be scheduled or reports prepared or sent unless the account is current. Health insurance does not cover Parenting Coordinator services as they are not therapy or health care services.

MISSED APPOINTMENTS

Unless canceled at least 24 hours in advance you will be charged for scheduled time at the above rates.

AGREEMENTS

In consideration of the services provided by Dr. Wehl, I agree:

1. That I am financially responsible for _____% of the services provided by Dr. Wehl. (If less than 100%, included signed agreements from other responsible parties totaling 100%). I agree to pay my share of the charges, regardless of which parent incurs the charges or the type of charges (e.g., broken appointments). **If governed by a court order, please attach the court order specifying financial arrangements between the parents.**
2. To pay the amount I owe (including amounts to replenish the \$500 revolving credit balance) within 15 days of receiving a statement. Dr. Wehl may charge my credit card for this amount if he has not received full payment 20 days after mailing me a statement. I agree to pay a finance charge of 18% per annum (1.5% per month) on the 30 day unpaid balance.
3. To pay the court/deposition rate of \$225 per hour at the time of service or scheduling for Dr. Wehl's preparation and time away from the office to appear (3 hours of preparation plus 4 hours for half day away from office to appear, or plus 8 hours for full day away from office to

¹ My fees change infrequently, usually every few years, and by a small percentage. When they change on my website, they will change on your case. My current fees can be found on the consent forms for parenting coordination at www.chriswehl.com/forms

appear). That I will pay the hourly rate for canceled court appearances and depositions unless they are canceled with Dr. Wehl at least 2 business days in advance.

4. That I will pay all attorney's fees, court costs and filing fees, including charges or commissions up to 50% that may be assessed by any collection agency retained by Dr. Wehl to pursue collection of my account if it should become 60 days delinquent.
5. That I will pay \$35 for checks returned unpaid by my bank or credit card charge-backs, in addition to the actual fee charged by Dr. Wehl's bank.
6. Any refunds on funds paid via credit cards will have the credit card fees deducted from the refunded amount.
7. That I permit a copy of this authorization to be used in place of the original.
8. That I have read this policy (above) and understand and accept the terms of this policy.

Required credit card to be used to bring my account current (including replenishing the deposit) 15 days after receiving a statement. I also authorize Dr. Wehl to validate this card by making a nominal charge which will be credited to my account.

Visa Mastercard Amex # _____ Exp: _____
card number

3 or 4 digit Card Security Code _____ Billing zip code for card: _____

Circle one

Yes No Do you want this card billed for your retainer?

Yes No Do you want us to bill your credit card periodically for the amount you owe? This is the best way to keep your case progressing, as I have to stop working on your case from when I send statements until I receive payment. If you check this option I will send you an itemized statement.

Yes No Do you want to receive statements by email?

I HAVE READ THE INFORMATION IN THIS DOCUMENT AND CONSENT TO ABIDE BY ITS TERMS.

Signature of responsible party

Date

BILLING INFORMATION

CLIENTS:

Full legal Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip Code: _____

Phone: _____ (Home) Phone: _____ X _____ (Work)

Email: _____

Sex:(M : F) Date of Birth: _____ Age: _____ SSN: _____

Full legal Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip Code: _____

Phone: _____ (Home) Phone: _____ X _____ (Work)

Email: _____

Sex:(M : F) Date of Birth: _____ Age: _____ SSN: _____

Date married: _____

Date separated: _____

Full Names and dates of birth of children:

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____