



Dear Attorney,

This letter outlines the procedures for Lane County Family Mediation (LCFM) custody and parenting time evaluation.

Order

We require an order of the court to conduct the evaluation.

Prerequisites

In order to narrow the scope of the evaluations and honor the value of parents working together to create a custody and parenting time schedule in the best interests of their children, we require that both parents have attended, in this court action, the Focus on Children (FOC) class and a mediation session with a LCFM mediator before scheduling the initial appointment. If they have not taken FOC in this action, please instruct them to register at www.lanecounty.org/mediation.

Communication with Attorneys

Assuming both parties are represented, any oral discussions of case content with attorneys will be done via conference call with two exceptions: the discussion of procedures (e.g., when the report will be released), and communications strictly concerning arrangements for testimony will take place with attorneys' offices separately.

Fee

The fee to FMP is \$1,500 and must be paid in full prior to scheduling the initial appointment. In addition, if the evaluator is called to testify, the fee is \$250 for half-day and \$500 for full day. The testimony fees must be paid at least two weeks in advance.

Scheduling Appointments

Once the order has been received, the prerequisites met, and the fee paid in full, our office will contact the parents with their scheduled appointments. In the event we do not have their contact information, please instruct them to email our office at mediation@co.lane.or.us with their full contact information.

Informed Consent

During the initial appointment, we require the parties to sign an informed consent regarding evaluation procedures, which we also discuss in person. The parties and their attorneys are provided with the informed consent in advance, for their review.

Materials Submitted

Parents are asked to complete a Questionnaire and Potential Collateral Contact List, and gather the materials requested in the questionnaire. With respect to any written materials provided to Lane County Family Mediation, it is your client's responsibility to

provide copies to the other party and the other party's attorney within 24 hours of giving the materials to LCFM. Everyone must be in possession of the same materials and information. Most ancillary material is read at the end of the evaluation while preparing the report.

Length of Evaluation Process and Scheduling

Our goal is to finish the evaluation six weeks from the initial appointment. In order to accomplish this, the parties must make themselves available to come to appointments according to the LCFM schedule. The initial appointment will not be scheduled until full payment is received.

While we understand that there are situations in which delays are unavoidable, we ask that you please help your clients understand the importance of adhering to the schedule. Reasons for parties not making themselves available for the schedule of appointment times will be included in the evaluator's report.

Reporting Results

We generally complete a brief written report that includes the recommended custody and parenting time schedule; we do not meet with the parents and attorneys to present or discuss the report. The report is released simultaneously to attorneys (or directly to the parents if unrepresented).

Testimony

In some cases, we are subpoenaed to testify in court. We testify as the court's expert and remain neutral. If we are asked to testify at a deposition or court appearance, we expect a subpoena that makes it clear whether it's the evaluator's testimony or the entire file that is required. We ask that you make arrangements with our office at least two weeks in advance and schedule us to appear for a given day or half-day. We do not make arrangements to be "on call." If subpoenaed, the requesting party will be responsible to pay Expert Testimony fees: \$250 for a half-day (up to four hours) or \$500 for a full day (four to eight hours). Expert Testimony fees must be paid two-weeks in advance or with the subpoena, whichever comes first.

Security Issues

If there is a restraining order/s in place at the time of the evaluation, please notify our office as soon as you know about it, so we can make appropriate modifications regarding procedures that may bring the parties into contact with one another. Also please notify us if either parent has a concern about possession of guns, fears of child abduction, or any other concerns that may require extra attention to security.

Court Dates

Attorneys are responsible for informing us of the court date for which the report is needed. If we cannot complete the report within the time frame of the given court date, we will contact the attorneys with an expected date of completion.

Sincerely,
Lane County Family Mediation