



## **PARENTING COORDINATION (PC) REFERRAL PROCESS**

1. Each parent contacts me by email, to book a confidential 15-minute telephone consultation. The purpose of this call is to determine whether the basic requirements for PC exist, as well as to give each parent a chance to ask some preliminary questions about the PC process.
2. The parents send me their Separation Agreement/Parenting Plan/Court Order, and any other relevant Court Orders or Agreements, copying each other.
3. Assuming the basic requirements for PC are met, the parents are willing and I am available, I book an individual intake meeting with each parent, usually by email. Both parties are informed of the booking of the intake meeting, although they may not each be made aware of the exact date and time of each other's session.
4. This individual intake meeting includes the PC's requirement to screen the parties for power imbalances and domestic violence, as per the requirements of *The Family Statute Law Amendment Act, 2006*. At this meeting, the parents are also each given the opportunity to inquire further about the PC process. Most intake sessions take least 2 hours, some lasting as long as 3.
5. Subject to the limits of confidentiality, described in Paragraph 11 below, any notes from the initial 15-minute telephone consult and the individual screening/intake session are kept confidential, and are not disclosed to the parents or anyone else.
6. Parents are each responsible for payment of their own individual screening session and payment is due on the day of service. The screening must be completed before the PC Agreement is signed.
7. Once the parents have each attended their individual screening/intake session with me, I book a meeting (usually in the form of a teleconference or Zoom video-conference) with the parents' lawyers, to go over and finalize the PC Agreement, paying particular attention to the PC's jurisdiction, i.e. the issues she has the mandate and duty to arbitrate.

8. The parents deliver one original, fully executed PC Agreement to me, including certificates of Independent Legal Advice and retainer, specific amount of retainer having been determined during the intake process. I then sign a declaration, which includes the fact that I have screened the parents for domestic violence and power imbalances, attaching this declaration to the PC Agreement. The completion and execution of the PC Agreement marks the conclusion of the intake process.
9. The PC process begins, which typically means a first session is booked by the PC. Although most first sessions are joint, depending on the results of the screening, some parents may meet separately with the PC, at least initially and/or from time to time throughout the PC process.
10. It should be noted that although most cases do proceed after the intake process, some may get “screened out” if they are not considered suitable for PC.

**Limits to Confidentiality:**

11. I have a duty to report to the appropriate officials if I have reason to believe that a child is in need of protection, in accordance with the Child Youth and Family Services Act. In addition, I may disclose information to authorities or relevant others if I feel that either party is a danger to him/herself, or to someone else, or if I am ordered to do so by a judge or as required by law.

**Legal Representation and Requirement for Court Order:**

12. As a PC, I do not take unrepresented clients. The lawyers must be involved during the intake process, e.g. in the finalizing of the PC Agreement, must be available and willing to provide their clients with a certificate of Independent Legal Advice, and must remain on record throughout the term of the PC process.
13. The referral for Parenting Coordination must be endorsed by a Court Order. The parties should check about the PC's availability and willingness to take on their case prior to obtaining the Court Order.

**Adjustments to PC Referral & Process due to Impact of COVID-19:**

14. Access to the Courts is limited and difficult due to the restrictions imposed by the current COVID-19 pandemic. In recognition of this unfortunate

reality, the requirement for a Court Order for parents to proceed with PC may be waived in some cases. When determining whether it is appropriate to do so, matters such as the wording of parties' existing parenting plans/separation agreements, level of parental conflict, the parents' wishes and other factors are considered.

15. Wherever possible, appropriate and safe, meetings are being conducted virtually, with Zoom video-conferencing. It should be noted that video-conferencing is not considered appropriate in some circumstances and as such, the delivery of service may be postponed in some cases. The possibility of conducting face-to-face sessions will resume if and as government restrictions are lifted, and in accordance with the requirements and needs of each individual case.