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PARENTAL RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

EVALUATION PROCEDURES

INTRODUCTION:

I have been requested to conduct psychological procedures in regard to a determination of the best interests of your child (children). The results of my psychological evaluation, psychological testing (if conducted) and collateral interviews are intended to provide information to finders of fact or parties involved in the determination of the child's best interest. As such, the results of these procedures form only part of the foundation for such determinations.

There are three sets of increasingly complex procedures employed in providing psychological information regarding the best interests of the child or children. Each of the procedures allows the psychologist to provide different opinions based on information obtained employing different procedures. These three procedures are described below:

PROCEDURE A:

This form of psychological evaluation focuses on the history and current psychological functioning of one or both parents. Such an examination will include a mental status examination and history, psychological testing if indicated, and a review of documents if such documents are provided. Participation in this procedure typically requires three to six hours of attendance at my office. Following the completion of this form of assessment, information can be provided to a fact finder or parties as to whether or not significant and reliable barriers to safe and adequate parenting are present. No differential custody recommendations can be provided based on this form of assessment. Procedure A allows for an examination as to whether or not psychological factors are such that adequate and safe parenting is precluded. Such an evaluation cannot assert that a person is an adequate parent for a specific child.

PROCEDURE B:

Procedure B includes the elements identified above. In addition, the child or children of the examined party are also interviewed by the psychologist. In some instances children's interviews are videotaped. Psychological testing is occasionally undertaken with the children or a referral is made for specialized testing. It is not uncommon for the child's medical, educational and other records to be reviewed. Following the individual assessments of the parent and child, one or more interactional observations is conducted by the psychologist. Following the completion of these procedures, an opinion can be provided to the finder of fact or litigating parties as to whether or not a particular parent is precluded as a result of psychological factors from safe and adequate parenting of these specific children. An opinion affirming the capacity of the parent to positively and safely parent these particular children is also typically possible under these circumstances. A differential custody recommendation, however, cannot be provided based on the assessment combining the elements of Procedure A and Procedure B.

PROCEDURE C:

Procedure C combines the elements of A and B above for both parties. Following the completion of these procedures, it is ethically and theoretically possible to offer differential recommendations as to parental competence with the specific children involved. In some instances, no differential recommendations are available in that both parents are essentially competent and/or incompetent.

Included in Procedures A, B and C is the utilization of psychological tests. These tests are unusually sophisticated in detecting what is termed "impression management." There is a tendency for persons involved in litigation regarding custody of children to deny or minimize psychological problems. The psychological tests employed are quite sensitive to these efforts and parents should be aware that conscious distortion of test findings will compromise the ability of the psychologist to make valid and reliable recommendations.

When two or more child caretakers are involved in the assessment procedures, the parties or their representatives are encouraged to provide reasonable amounts of printed material they deem important in assisting the psychologist in making accurate conclusions and useful recommendations. In some instances, additional collateral parties are interviewed in person or by phone. In Procedure C, the initial interview ideally is jointly conducted with the two parties and the psychologist so as to afford the psychologist an opportunity to observe the current interactional style of the co-parents. Occasionally, a final meeting involving the psychologist and the two parents (and in some instances their legal representatives) is also conducted.

Procedures A, B and C have common informed consent elements. These include the need for honesty, candor and cooperation. In the event that an evaluated party poses a reasonably predictable imminent risk of harm to themselves or others, the psychologist is ethically bound to take whatever steps necessary to reduce, eliminate, or make notification of this risk. This obligation applies to assaultive, self injurious, and sexually exploitive behavior.

In the course of the evaluation, reasonable breaks will be accorded to maintain the comfort level of the parties. Individuals being evaluated are under no obligation to answer specific question, and if they wish to refrain from answering such questions, the psychologist will write the questions down to afford the party an opportunity to consult with their attorneys or other advisers. The refusal to answer questions will be included as part of the psychological report. Parties are permitted to terminate the interview or evaluation process at any time they so desire. The evaluation cannot take place under coercive circumstances wherein a threat or promise has been made to either party and that threat or promise is undeclared or unknown to the examiner. Judicial orders, consent agreements, or agreements made between parties are not considered to be threats or promises.

Procedures A, B and C are all time consuming. Fees for procedures are payable in advance. No findings will be published or released to any party prior to the payment of all fees. Appearance fees and deposition fees are payable ten days in advance. Complete refunds for pre-paid appearance or depositions costs are made only with two working days notice. After two working days, only that portion of the fee not recovered will be refunded.

Assuming optimal cooperation and timely payment, Procedure A can typically be completed within one month of the first scheduled interview. Depending on the number of dependents and collateral interviews, Procedure B can encompass anywhere from six to twelve weeks. Procedure C takes anywhere from eight weeks onward depending on the number of parties evaluated.

Your signature below constitutes an acknowledgment that you have read, understood, and accept the conditions outlined above.

The hourly rate for Procedure ____ is _____. The procedure fee for Procedure _____ is _____.

FATHER:

DOB: _____
SSN: _____

MOTHER:

DOB: _____
SSN: _____

GUARDIAN AND/OR RELEVANT OTHER:

DOB: _____
SSN: _____

By my (our) signature(s) below we hereby authorize Charles L. Robinson, Ph.D. to undertake psychological evaluations of my (our) dependents. By my (our) signature we represent that we are legally entitled to authorize Dr. Robinson's evaluation of my (our) dependent(s) and to release these findings. This release also permits the audio and/or video taping of child (children) evaluations.

FATHER:

MOTHER:

GUARDIAN AND/OR RELEVANT OTHER:

1st Dependant: _____ DOB: _____

2nd Dependant: _____ DOB: _____

3rd Dependant: _____ DOB: _____

4th Dependant: _____ DOB: _____

5th Dependant: _____ DOB: _____

6th Dependant: _____ DOB: _____

By my (our) signature(s) below we authorize the release of findings from the procedures identified above to our attorney(s)/representative(s), the Guardian ad litem and the Court.

FATHER:

MOTHER:

GUARDIAN AND/OR RELEVANT OTHER:

Charles L. Robinson, Ph.D.