

Parent Coordinator Training

As most family law attorneys know, New Jersey has a pilot parent coordinator program. Its purpose is to help divorced parents settle parenting disputes without having to return to court to do so. PCs work under the auspicious of the family court. Most pcs are mental health professionals, but if parties agree, attorneys and even in some cases family members or neighbors can function in this role. The PC program seeks to reduce the amount of litigation in family law cases, (and the stress brought upon children and the court system by it), by having coordinators work with parents to resolve their differences over particular issues. If parents cannot satisfactorily settle a matter with a PC's assistance and it ends up back in court, the judge may consider the pc's recommendations when deciding a dispute.

Acting as a parent coordinator in high conflict cases can be challenging and emotionally draining and can expose professionals to ethical issues that can create professional risks. For this reason, anyone currently serving as a PC or seeking PC appointments should acquire training to help them develop the necessary skills and tools to work with high conflict families. Lawyers that handle cases where PCs have been assigned should acquaint themselves with the parenting coordinating process as well.

In order to meet this need, ICLE is pleased to present Matthew J. Sullivan, Ph.D., a psychologist in private practice in California, who has trained PCs nationwide. He is currently serving on the editorial board of the Journal of Child Custody and is active in AFCC. Dr. Sullivan will:

- Discuss how to work through a practical set of procedures to do parenting coordination with highly conflicted co-parents
- Discuss the importance of working with comprehensive parenting plans as the basis for functional parallel co-parenting
- Stress what principles and procedures are necessary in the parenting coordinator process to provide intensive training in functional co-parenting
- Provide practical materials—such as orders of appointment, detailed parenting plans, sample documentation, policies and procedures, discussion of fees—to help establish a practice in this area
- Describe the professional and ethical risks involved in parent coordinating.
- Define the objectives of parent coordinating
- Provide intensive training in dispute resolution by showing attendees how to facilitate agreements and make decisions
- Discuss structural disengagement and parallel parenting
- Discuss how and when children can be included in the PC process

An hour long panel discussion about the particulars of the NJ PC program will follow Dr. Sullivan's presentation.

Featuring:

Matthew J. Sullivan, Ph.D.
Add short bio in here

Joining Dr. Sullivan:

Cary Cheifetz, Esq.
Sharon Ryan Montgomery, Psy.D.

Marcy Pasternak, Ph.D.

Saturday, December 6, 2008
New Jersey Law Center, New Brunswick
9-4

Credits:

In addition to NY/PA this program should have mediation and matrimonial credit.