

Definition of Parenting Coordination

“Parenting coordination is a child-focused alternative dispute resolution process in which a mental health or legal professional with mediation training and experience assists high conflict parents to implement their parenting plan by facilitating the resolution of their disputes in a timely manner, educating parents about children’s needs, and with prior approval of the parties and/or the court, making decisions within the scope of the court order or appointment contract.

The overall objective of parenting coordination is to assist high conflict parents to implement their parenting plan, to monitor compliance with the details of the plan, to resolve conflicts regarding their children and the parenting plan in a timely manner, and to protect and sustain safe, healthy and meaningful parent-child relationships. Parenting coordination is a quasi-legal, mental health, alternative dispute resolution (ADR) process that combines assessment, education, case management, conflict management and sometimes decision-making functions.

The Parenting Coordinator (PC) role is most frequently reserved for those high conflict parents who have demonstrated their longer-term inability or unwillingness to make parenting decisions on their own, to comply with parenting agreements and orders, to reduce their child-related conflicts, and to protect their children from the impact of that conflict. Because the PC makes recommendations and/or decisions for the parties and possibly reports to the court [not in Colorado], the PC should be appointed by and responsible to the court. This delegation of judicial authority is a serious issue and the court should only appoint qualified professionals. The power and authority inherent in the role of the PC are substantial whether stipulated by the parties or assigned by the court. Therefore it is important that any jurisdiction implementing a parenting coordination program adopt and adhere to guidelines for PC practice and programs.”

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