

**Model Standards for
Forensic Service
Providers for the Eighth
Judicial District Court**

Model Standards for Forensic Service Providers for the Eighth Judicial District Court

At the request of the Eighth Judicial District Court-Family Division, a committee was established to explore setting model standards for forensic service providers for the Family Court. The following are standards developed by that committee and unanimously accepted by the Judges of the Eighth Judicial District Court-Family Division:

Child Custody Evaluators

Initial Education/Training:

- Minimum 40 hour CEU training on child custody evaluations

The comprehensive training should include:

- General components of a custody evaluation (at least one day)
- Abuse/domestic violence and how it impacts custody issues (at least one day)
- Ethics as it relates to forensic services (at least one day)
- Substance abuse (1/2 day)

The remaining training may include other custody related topics, such as:

- Legal knowledge/Nevada law as it relates to custody issues
- Relocation issues
- Report writing
- Alienation
- Child development
- Sexual abuse

Ongoing Training:

- 12 CEU's per year SPECIFIC to custody evaluations
- Training approved by the committee does NOT require CEU approval from a licensing board

Mentor Program:

- New evaluators should participate in a mentoring relationship through FIVE cases
- Mentors serve in a CONSULTING capacity and NOT a SUPERVISORY capacity
- Mentors should have contact with the mentee a minimum of three times during the evaluation process for each case

Mentor Qualifications:

- At least three years as a custody evaluator
- At least 20 evaluations completed for the local Court
- Submission of TWO reports to the committee for review of written work

Report Format:

- While each evaluator should have the creative freedom to format their report, and order the contents in a way that makes sense to them, each report should have the following components:
- Participant information
- Reason for the service
- Review of legal documents/discovery
- Informed consent
- Contacts with participants
- History, relevant information/issues
- Testing/inventories administered (when appropriate)
- Child interviews (when appropriate)
- Collateral Interviews
- Home visits
- Analysis/summary of information
- Findings and recommendations (when appropriate)

Tests/Tools/Inventories

- Evaluators must be knowledgeable about the relevance, efficacy (validity, reliability, etc.) of any tests/tools/inventories used in the evaluative process.
- Evaluators must be proficient in administering any tests/tools/inventories that are used in the evaluative process.

Parent Coordinators

12 Hours of training specific to providing Parent Coordinator services, including but not limited to:

The Parenting Coordination Process

- Functions of a Parent Coordinator
- Guidelines of Parent Coordinator services
- Determining appropriateness of Issues to address in the Coordination process

Family dynamics in Separation and Divorce

- Psychological issues in dealing separation and divorce and family dynamics
- Issues concerning the needs of the children in the context of divorce
- Dealing with high conflict parents
- Dealing with domestic violence issues
- Differentiating between cooperative, parallel, and conflicted co-parenting relationships

Parenting Coordinator Techniques and Issues

- Structuring the Parent Coordination process
- Informed consent and service contract
- The role of the Parenting Plan in the Parenting Coordination process
- Building agreements, including knowing how/when to switch between dispute resolution processes
- Arbitration procedures
- Parent Coordination boundaries
- Using outside experts

Court Specific Parenting Coordination Procedures

- The Parent Coordinator's responsibility to the Court
- Knowledge of/adherence to jurisdiction specific requirements for the Parent Coordinator
- Local/state family law as it pertains to the Parent Coordinator process
- How/When the Parent Coordinator should interface with the Court system
- Grievance procedures for the Parent Coordinator process

Ongoing Training:

- 12 CEU's per year SPECIFIC to forensic services
- Training approved by the committee does NOT require CEU approval from a licensing board

Mentor Program:

- New Parent Coordinators should participate in a mentoring relationship through FIVE cases
- Mentors serve in a CONSULTING capacity and NOT a SUPERVISORY capacity
- Mentors should have contact with the mentee a minimum of two times per month during the Parent Coordinator process

Mentor Qualifications:

- At least three years as a Parent Coordinator
- At least 10 Parent Coordinator cases completed for the local Court

Selection/Assignment of Service Providers

- To ensure the requisite education, training, and experience, cases should only be assigned to providers who have submitted a complete application, meet the minimum qualifications, and have been placed on the Court's approved Provider List.

Application process

- Applications for forensic service providers can be obtained through the Family Mediation Center
- A fee should be attached to the application process in order to defray any administrative costs associated with the Steering Committee services
- Once complete applications are submitted, the Steering Committee will review the application and either accept the application or make recommendations for action needed in order for the application to be accepted (i.e., address the mentoring process for a new service provider)

A Steering Committee should be in place to serve as a liaison between the professional community and the Court. The Steering Committee Responsibilities should be as follows:

- The Steering Committee should have the responsibility of reviewing new applicants, as well as annual reviews of current forensic service providers that are listed in the Court's Approved Service Provider Directory.
- The Steering Committee should oversee the Mentoring process to ensure that new providers have contracted with experienced Mentor's and to monitor the process until the mentoring process is completed.
- The Steering Committee should act as a clearing house, distributing any available materials to the approved service providers.
- Steering Committee members should be selected to serve for a two-year term.

Establishing a Local Court Rule

- In order to provide consistent, quality, and professional services to the Court and its clients, it is recommended that the Eighth Judicial District Court-Family Division establish a Local Court Rule adopting these recommendations.