

AN INTRODUCTION TO CCRC

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As Child Custody Recommending Counselors or mediators, we do our best to remain unbiased. If we find ourselves in a situation where we do have biases, we are obligated to recognize and acknowledge them. I would like to acknowledge a few of mine now.

The research shows that children can tolerate nearly any parenting plan solution that settles the conflict between their parents far better than they tolerate ongoing conflict. Because of this it is my bias that it is best for your children when you can agree on a custody or parenting plan rather than remain in conflict.

Another of my biases is that I think it is best for your children when you can share postdivorce parenting responsibilities. If you have children and you must divorce you all it to them to find a way to coparent peacefully and effectively. Your children will do their best when they know it is important to you that they have the best relationship they can possibly have with their other parent.

If you have been referred to me for CCRC it means the court has ordered me to provide nonconfidential or recommending mediation. This means that when you, after substantial effort, are unable to agree on a particular issue or issues I must make a recommendation to the court regarding that issue. This brings up another of my biases.

It is my opinion that you are the leading expert when it comes to your child. No one, not me and not the court is in a better position than you to decide what is best for your child. As a result, I

will make every effort to help you come to as many parenting plan agreements as possible. The research demonstrates that a parenting plan fashioned and agreed to by you and tailored to your specific needs will be more durable and serve your family better than one I might recommend. As an aside, recommendations are necessarily more time-consuming and more expensive.

CCRC or mediation is not counseling or therapy. Parents and sometimes their children will occasionally need therapy to help them deal effectively with the emotions and experiences the divorce process can produce so, while we will not engage in therapy during CCRC, I may recommend therapy to help you through the process.

Please read the Ground Rules for Mediation and the Tips to Prepare for Child Custody Mediation before your first session. I also suggest reading Parenting after Divorce by Philip M Stahl PhD. This small book is full of practical advice that will help you and your children make positive adjustments to your new family structure.

Some states, such as Arizona (<https://www.azcourts.gov/portals/31/parentingTime/PPWguidelines.pdf>) and Oregon (<https://www.courts.oregon.gov/programs/family/children/Pages/parenting-plan-guide.aspx>) have very helpful parenting plan information on their judicial websites. I encourage you to review this information for its relevance to your family. I also encourage you to carefully read your Informed Consent and Agreement to Participate in Private CCRC. This document contains a wealth of information, and it is important that you have a thorough understanding of it before we begin.

I will review and we can discuss all pertinent documents you wish to submit for consideration if I have proof of timely advance notice to the other parent (use the Proof of Service Form for this purpose). Please consider the documents you submit. Make sure they are important and relevant. I not only read these documents, but I also study and sometimes verify them. The time it takes me to do this costs you money. Likewise, I will make telephone contact with your professional collateral persons, for example counselors, teachers, doctors, etc. If you want me to consider the opinions of friends and family members, ask them to fill out the Parenting Reference Questionnaire and mail it directly to me.

If you reach agreement, it may not be necessary for me to interview your children. While I consider this preferable, interviewing your children will be unavoidable if I must make recommendations. If I do interview your children rest assured that I will make every effort to make their experience as comfortable and reassuring as I possibly can.