

## FULL CUSTODY EVALUATION

Dear Parent:

I have received a stipulation to do a psychological custody evaluation for your family from your attorney. Going through a custody evaluation can be a stressful experience, both because of the emotions and the many details to remember. This letter is to try to help you be informed ahead of time about what will happen and help you organize yourself, to help the process go as smoothly as possible. The directions to our office and the office door-code are attached or can be requested. Also, see the checklist at the end of this letter.

There is a very set pattern to the schedule of appointments. Your first day of appointments will involve both parties and the children at issue, in this order: a half-hour orientation with the parents together, followed by one-hour individual sessions with each parent; a one-hour lunch break, followed by half-hour interaction sessions with the biological child/ren and each parent; then individual sessions with the child/ren. Please phone our office as soon as possible to discuss and confirm your initial and follow-up appointments.

I will go over procedures with both parties on your first day of appointments and ask you to sign an informed consent and a custody release of information form. Please read the informed consent and the stipulation you signed in advance, as it covers many important details.

Remember you will be charged for all appointments not canceled seven (7) court days in advance (or within 14 court days of the initial appointment day).

Please complete the Custody Evaluation Questionnaire and gather the extra materials described in the questionnaire. Also complete the Potential Collateral Contact List. We want no original materials except for the Custody Evaluation Questionnaire. Please submit letter-sized materials, not legal-sized materials. Please do not submit binders. All materials described must be submitted to the evaluator at the time of the initial appointment with two extra copies that the evaluator will give to the other party.

Any other materials supplied to the evaluator at a later date ('ancillary materials') must either be from your attorney and copied to the other attorney or, if from you, be supplied to the other party and your attorney who will copy to the other attorney.

We make a special effort to put children at ease and minimize disruption in their lives from the evaluation. You may prepare them for the session by saying that I am a psychologist who helps fathers and mothers make decisions about how to take care of children when they do not all live together anymore. You can also say that I will need to talk to them about their thoughts and feelings about their lives so I can help you with decisions.

You will be asked to take the Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory-2 and the Millon Clinical Multiaxial Inventory-II. These are paper and pencil tests that take around two-and-one-half hours to complete. You must take them in my office at a time arranged with our staff. You may be referred for more extensive testing.

You will be kept apprised of fees due in the evaluation. If the initial deposit is used up, you will be notified of the need to make further deposits before the evaluation goes forward.

Shortly before the report is ready for release, you will be notified of the balance due, payable by cashier's check. Estimates of cost can be obtained earlier. The report is released after all fees are collected. Please be prepared so release is timely.

My assistants are usually available to schedule appointments during business hours. If you cannot reach them directly by phone (310/392-6163) on those days, please leave a message about how they may reach you. If you need to leave me a message, it is better to fax me the information in writing (FAX# 310/392-6043). If you wish additional time to speak with me, an appointment may be scheduled. If you use email to communicate with my office, you acknowledge the risk of misdirected communication.

Sincerely yours,

Mary Elizabeth Lund, Ph.D.

Angus Strachan, Ph.D.

## **Checklist For Starting A Custody Evaluation With Lund & Strachan**

### **To schedule an appointment, please provide:**

- Key contact information
- Initial deposit
- Stipulation signed by both parties and both attorneys

Then we will assign a date for the initial day of appointments.

### **Complete the Custody Evaluation Questionnaire:**

- You may complete it by hand or you can type it.
- If you want to type it, you can ask our staff to send a Word version.
- If you type it, please use double spacing and at least 12-point font.
- Please limit your responses to the space provided. For any one question, try not to add more than one page beyond the space provided.
- All materials must be letter-size.
- Please staple or clip the questionnaires and attachments. Do not put them in binders. Manila or accordion folders are good.

### **Bring to the initial appointment the original and two copies of:**

- The Custody Evaluation Questionnaire
- The Potential Collateral Contact List
- Other materials requested in the questionnaire attached at the end.

(The two copies are for the other parent and their attorney. Make two extra copies for yourself and your attorney.)

### **Be ready to sign at the initial appointment:**

- The informed consent form
- The Custody Release of Information Form

### **Filing other materials:**

- All other materials ('ancillary materials') should be copied to the other party and your attorney (with an extra copy for the other attorney).
- This should be done as soon as possible and no later than six weeks after the initial appointment.

### **Further deposit requests:**

- Expect at least one further deposit request.
- All fees must be paid before the report is released.