



# First Coast Family Solutions

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## Basic Procedure for Time Sharing Evaluations

1. Each parent returns the signed consent and fee agreement and other related signature documents. The court order and payment deposit (retainer) are received and the initial joint interview is scheduled. Appointments may be scheduled in the early evenings to accommodate work schedules if need be.

2. Both parents will complete the Initial Parent Questionnaire. It is extremely helpful if you type your responses on the document and return it to me via email, or by fax. It is important that this be completed early in the process.

3. I typically meet with the parents together, if possible, without the child or children. This meeting should take place in my office, or in a neutral location. I prefer to meet with both parents jointly, to ensure that each hears the other's position about significant issues and proposals for a parenting plan. While this may be uncomfortable for some, divorced parents will need to communicate with one another under all but the most extreme circumstances, and I like to observe their ability to do this. If you have a strong opposition to a joint meeting, please explain the reasons, in writing, in a letter to me, and I will consider meeting with each parent alone. During this meeting I will want to know the history of the parents' relationship. I will want to know what the parents are unable to agree upon, and what they each want. I will want to know what complaints you have of the other parent, and will eventually want to see what objective evidence supports your complaints or concerns. Anything in writing will be reviewed, and is usually helpful to the process. I will want to know who each parent believes I could contact to support their position (less obviously biased persons being preferred). PLEASE FILL IN AND RETURN A WITNESS INFORMATION SHEET FOR EACH WITNESS YOU WOULD LIKE ME TO CONTACT. We may not be able to contact them all but we will usually conduct a minimum of three interviews. If either parent is involved in a new relationship, I will want to meet that individual, and may want to involve them in the evaluation process. I will also suggest how to prepare the children for the evaluation process.

4. I will review documents you provide me that you think are relevant to the question of custody/time sharing. This could include court documents, letters or emails between the parties, supervised exchange notes, prior psychological evaluations, police reports, etc. Reviewing documents is quite time-consuming, so please limit documents to those that prove a point that isn't known from other sources or that would be important to the custody recommendation. It is often helpful if you can attach a note that explains what you think I will learn from reviewing the document.

5. Our next meeting will be for each parent (and significant others, if applicable) to be interviewed both alone, with with the minor child or children, in their home. I will meet with each parent separately for about 2-3 hours to find out about their history and parenting. I will also want to know about their experience of the other parent and their response to the criticisms of the other parent. ALL SESSIONS ARE RECORDED TO PROTECT THE PARTICIPANTS. The purpose is to see how the children interact with each parent in a typical, comfortable setting. I will not

want to be the focus of the meeting with the child but to observe the family function, so don't feel the need to entertain me. During this visit, I will ask the children to give me a tour of the home, yard, and perhaps, neighborhood. Please have available paper, crayons, and some simple toys.

6. I will contact collaterals (witnesses) that each parent has identified as having relevant information to share. I will decide which suggested collaterals to contact.

7. If you have videotapes of family events that predated the separation, and you think they might be useful for documenting how the parents or children behaved, please make a copy for me.

8. I will then need to interview the child/children's teacher, doctors, babysitters, and daycare providers, as necessary. I will want the children's teachers to complete a Child Behavior Check List on each child.

9. After I have completed the information-gathering portion of the evaluation, I will notify your attorney, and after final payment is made by both parties, the report will be submitted to the attorneys and the Court.

**\*\*\*EVERYTHING DISCLOSED IN THIS EVALUATION IS SUBJECT TO DISCLOSURE TO THE COURT AND THE OTHER PARTY. THERE IS NO CONFIDENTIALITY WHATSOEVER. EACH LITIGANT MUST SIGN A COPY OF THIS LETTER TO INDICATE RECEIPT OF THE LETTER, AND RETURN IT TO MY OFFICE PRIOR TO THE COMMENCEMENT OF THE EVALUATION TO INDICATE THEIR AGREEMENT TO THE TERMS HEREIN.**

Sincerely,

Susan Pniewski, Esquire FCE

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Signature of Father

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Signature of Mother