



First Coast Family Solutions

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TIME SHARING EVALUATIONS

What to tell the children

This evaluation by nature is going to involve the children. Children are frequently curious. They may ask you for information on the process, and what to expect. My advice for explaining a custody evaluation to the children is something like:

‘You know that mom and dad have had trouble agreeing on some things since the separation, and we have been appointed a time sharing evaluator to make some recommendations about what would be best for you. She will be meeting with mom and dad, and she will come to both homes while you are there, to see where you live and how each household operates. She will also meet with the parents in her office to discuss the case and their experiences and have them fill out some questionnaires. She may ask you to fill out a questionnaire that is designed for children your age. When you meet with her, feel free to say what you truly believe, and answer her questions honestly. ‘

The important part is to not involve the children in parental conflict, and not share information that puts forth your "position" or makes the process sound "scary."

Don't tell the children what to say and what not to say.

Do not coach the children on what to mention.

Do not dwell on this evaluation or cause the children to become worried.

Do not make it seem like "a big deal".

Do not lead the children to believe that THEY are able to make the decisions, or that the responsibility for the decisions will rest on them.

Reassure the children that the evaluator and the Court are looking out for THEM, not for either parent.