



## **Kenneth Cole, PsyD**

### **Licensed Clinical Psychologist**

6816 W. Rio Grande Ave. Suite D, Kennewick, WA 99336

Office: (509) 737-9009 Fax: (509) 737-9010

kencole@center4psych.com

## **PARENTING EVALUATION PROTOCOL**

The steps of the evaluation that you will be asked to follow are described below so that each client will know exactly what will happen. This step-by-step plan will help Dr. Cole make fair recommendations about the best interests of your child(ren).

Please refer to your attorney for any questions or concerns that you may have during the evaluation process. Dr. Cole and his staff will not communicate with you directly aside from your scheduled appointments. **All e-mails are shared with both attorneys in order to promote openness and fairness during the evaluation process.**

### **BEFORE THE EVALUATION BEGINS**

1. Each parent must agree to the evaluation. There must be a Court order directing Dr. Cole to conduct the evaluation and a letter from each attorney that includes their perspective on this case and the purposes for this evaluation.
2. You will pay a fee before the evaluation starts ranging from \$5,000 - \$10,000, or more depending on the specifics of the situation. The exact amount will depend on such factors as number of individuals involved, travel costs, etc. The charge for the evaluation includes:
  - finding out facts about each parent's concerns
  - interviews with parents and collateral witnesses, not children
  - observing you with your child(ren)
  - making phone calls to people who know your family
  - administering psychological tests
  - scoring and interpreting results of psychological tests
  - writing the report and recommendations
  - talking with the attorneys

Each client must pay the fee before the evaluation begins, so that Dr. Cole cannot be held accountable for making decisions based on any outstanding balances.

3. Once the court order and the letters from each attorney are received by Dr. Cole, the Parenting Evaluation Agreement, intake information document and the Parenting History

Survey (PHS) are sent to each Examinee and are to be completed by you and returned to Dr. Cole within **TWO WEEKS**. Please **\*STAR\* or highlight** the parts of the PHS and other legal papers that you think are important. Consult with your attorney if you have any concerns about any documents.

## **AT THE FIRST APPOINTMENT**

4. The first appointment will last approximately 4 hours. To lessen stress, each client will be scheduled on separate days. During the first meeting with Dr. Cole, you will sign the Parenting Evaluation Agreement. The client and their attorney should discuss the Parenting Evaluation Protocol prior to this first interview.
5. During the first appointment, you will take a test called the MMPI-2. The MMPI-2 is the most commonly used psychological test.
6. After the MMPI-2, a very detailed interview will be conducted by Dr. Cole.
7. After the detailed interview, you will sign releases of information. These give Dr. Cole permission to talk to people who may have seen the other parent's parenting and/or your parenting firsthand or who have first-hand knowledge about other concerns.
8. If you would like Dr. Cole to talk to someone involved with your family who is not a licensed professional, that person must give Dr. Cole a legal statement, called a "declaration." The declaration must be a detailed statement from witnesses about parenting actions or other actions that concern you about the care of your children. Your attorney can show you a declaration form so that you can get the declarations from witnesses.

## **ALLEGATIONS**

9. At the end of the first interview, you will receive "allegation forms" to take home. Please fill out one of these forms for each concern about your children. Each concern should include three examples on three separate forms. Dr. Cole will use one of your concerns during your interview to show you how to complete these forms. You will have **TWO WEEKS** to return them. If either parent delays the return of these documents, the attorneys will be notified. The evaluation will not continue until the forms are returned.

Along with these allegation forms, you may return any additional records that you deem necessary for Dr. Cole to review. These records could be from: Police evaluation reports, criminal evaluation reports, juvenile court records, mental health records, medical records, school attendance and evaluation report cards, standardized testing records, social services agency records, and psychological and educational testing evaluation reports, etc. Please **\*STAR\* or highlight** the parts of the records that you think are important. Each parent must give Dr. Cole permission to talk with the professionals who have control over these records. Both parents will have **TWO WEEKS** to return the records.

10. Once your allegations and additional records have been returned, Dr. Cole's notes from his first interview with you will be sent to your attorney. At this point, you will have the opportunity to make any corrections that you see fit. You will have **TWO WEEKS** to return any edits that you have made.

## **PARENT/CHILD OBSERVATION**

11. The next step is to schedule the Parent/Child Observation. The purpose of this appointment is for Dr. Cole to watch you and your children playing or talking together. Depending on their ages, Dr. Cole will ask you to come to the office "ready to play with your children" or "ready to talk with your children" for about an hour.
12. If you have a new partner (spouse, fiancée, boyfriend or girlfriend) who is involved with the children, she or he may also be requested to take the MMPI-2 and may be interviewed by Dr. Cole. Dr. Cole will let you know if and when this will occur. This process can incur additional costs.

Dr. Cole will not usually talk with young children. He will not ask children about where they want to live or when or if they want to visit their parents. This is to protect the child(ren) from feeling guilty about what happens. Children should not feel caught in the middle of any parental fight.

Sometimes teenagers could be interviewed individually. This happens the hour before the last interview with one of the parents. This helps your child to avoid being blamed or feeling bad about the results of the evaluation.

13. At the end of the parent/child observation session, you will schedule a final interview with Dr. Cole.

## **REPORT**

14. Dr. Cole will write a first draft of the evaluation report before professionals or other people are contacted or any records are reviewed. This draft will include Dr. Cole's first thoughts about the concerns of both parties. This is done so that Dr. Cole's thoughts are formed just from contact with your family before other people's thoughts and opinions are shared with him. Dr. Cole wants you to feel the evaluation process is fair.

## **REVIEW OF RECORDS AND INTERVIEWS WITH OTHERS**

15. Dr. Cole will review all records given by the parents and attorneys.
16. Other people will be interviewed. A written summary of the interviews will be sent to each interviewee so that they can make corrections or add information that might be used. If any person delays being interviewed, Dr. Cole will tell both attorneys about this delay.

## **CLOSING INTERVIEWS**

17. During the last interview with Dr. Cole, he will discuss his first draft of his report with you. This provides you with the opportunity clear up any details that may be missing. Dr. Cole does not want you to be surprised by his results. Dr. Cole will not come to a decision about an allegation unless several facts from different sources support that result or finding. There must be multiple sources of confirmation concerning each allegation.

## **ATTORNEY MEETING**

18. At a meeting with the attorneys and the guardian ad litem, (if one is appointed), Dr. Cole will go over the final evaluation report. The parents do not attend this meeting. The attorneys of both parents must attend for the meeting to take place. Each attorney may ask questions about the evaluation report. Both lawyers will get a copy of the final report.

## **IF A TRIAL IS GOING TO OCCUR**

19. Please be aware that if Dr. Cole is to be called as an expert witness during a deposition or trial, because the two attorneys in your case cannot work out a settlement, then an additional advance fee will be required. **This is described in the Parenting Evaluation Agreement document.**

## **DECLARATION OF NON-COMPLIANCE**

20. If at any point during the Parenting Evaluation process, either parent delays the steps listed above, an email will be sent to the attorneys containing a warning of a Non-Compliance. If the parent remains non-compliant with the agreed upon terms, Dr. Cole must submit a Declaration of Non-Compliance to the courts.
21. Please do not try to contact Dr. Cole or his staff directly with any questions during the evaluation process. Direct your questions to your attorney and the matter will be addressed with both attorneys. Any violation of this procedure may be reported to the court and/or become part of the final report.