

1 **INFORMATION FOR PARENTS REGARDING THE USE OF PARENTING**
2 **COORDINATORS**

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4 Parenting coordination is a child-focused alternative dispute resolution process. The
5 overall objective of parenting coordination is to help parents resolve issues regarding their
6 parenting plan and legal decision-making orders so as to protect and support safe, healthy, and
7 meaningful parent-child relationships.

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9 A Parenting Coordinator is a professional with appropriate education, experience, and
10 expertise. The Parenting Coordinator’s roles is to help parents resolve parenting disputes and
11 make binding decisions, if the parents are unable to reach an agreement on their own.

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13 Parents may use a Parenting Coordinator when they need help with disputed issues,
14 reducing misunderstandings, clarifying priorities, exploring possibilities for compromise,
15 developing methods of collaboration in parenting, and complying with legal decision-making
16 authority and parenting time orders. By way of example, parenting challenges can include
17 disagreements about child pick-up and drop-off locations, dates, and times; holiday scheduling;
18 discipline; health and personal care issues; school and extracurricular activities; choice of
19 schools; and managing problematic behaviors.

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21 Before the Court can appoint a Parenting Coordinator, the parents must agree to use a
22 Parenting Coordinator and understand how the Parenting Coordinator charges for services. The
23 parents must also agree to:

- 1 1. the manner in which the Parenting Coordinator’s fees will be allocated between the
- 2 parents;
- 3 2. who the Parenting Coordinator will be or the method by which the Parenting
- 4 Coordinator will be selected;
- 5 3. release documents to the Parenting Coordinator that the Parenting Coordinator deems
- 6 necessary to the performance of services;
- 7 4. the length of the appointment; and
- 8 5. be bound by the Parenting Coordinator’s decisions.

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10 When a dispute is presented, the Parenting Coordinator will help the parents reach an

11 agreement. The Parenting Coordinator will determine the number and length of the meetings that

12 are necessary to resolve the issue. The Parenting Coordinator will make this determination based

13 upon the substance and complexity of the issue and the behavior of the parents.

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15 The Parenting Coordinator will decide what information is needed to resolve a dispute

16 and has the authority to get information, such as the children's opinions and information from

17 family members, doctors, therapists, schools, or other caretakers. The parenting coordination

18 process is not confidential. If a parent believes the parenting coordinator’s report contains

19 private or confidential information, the parent can ask the Parenting Coordinator to request that

20 the report be filed by the Court as a confidential or sealed document.

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22 The Parenting Coordinator’s decision is binding upon the parents, provided that the

23 decision is within the Parenting Coordinator’s scope of authority. If a parent believes that the

1 Parenting Coordinator's decision exceeds the scope of the Parenting Coordinator's authority, the
2 parent may file an objection with the Court. Examples of when a Parenting Coordinator exceeds
3 the scope of authority can be found in Rule 74(H)(3), Arizona Rules of Family Law Procedure.
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5 A Parenting Coordinator is appointed for a one-year term unless the parents agree to a
6 longer term. When a Parenting Coordinator's term expires, the parents can request that their
7 Parenting Coordinator be reappointed. As long as the Parenting Coordinator agrees, the Court
8 will typically grant the parents' request. A Parenting Coordinator cannot increase the hourly rate
9 for services during a term of appointment.
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11 The Parenting Coordinator can resign upon notice to each parent and order of the Court.
12 Both parents can jointly agree to discharge the Parenting Coordinator. However, neither parent
13 alone can discharge the Parenting Coordinator. If only one parent wishes to discharge the
14 Parenting Coordinator, that parent may file a motion explaining why the Parenting Coordinator
15 should be discharged. Disagreeing with one or more of the Parenting Coordinator's decisions
16 will not justify the discharge of a Parenting Coordinator.
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18 If the Parenting Coordinator acts in a manner that seems unethical or unprofessional, the
19 parent is encouraged to talk about those concerns with the Parenting Coordinator. A parent can
20 also follow the complaint process in Rule 74(N), Arizona Rules of Family Law Procedure.
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22 The Parenting Coordinator's goals are somewhat different than those of a judge. A judge's
23 job is to make orders that are based on the law. A Parenting Coordinator's job is to assist parents

1 in making parenting decisions in the best interests of the children and in accordance with the
2 parenting plan and legal decision-making orders issued by the court. A major goal is to help
3 parents develop their skills so they do not continue to need a Parenting Coordinator. If this can
4 be accomplished, the power to make decisions about their children is back in the hands of the
5 parents.