



## **What is Parent Coordination; What is Parent Facilitation? And What's the difference?**

**Parent coordination (PC)** and **parent facilitation (PF)** are essentially the same in many ways: Both require either 1) legalized agreement by both parties (i.e., in the form of a mediated settlement, rule eleven, or some other binding legal agreement) or 2) court appointment by a judge. Both PC and PF involve an educational process through which parents develop operative skills for conflict resolution and effective communication.

The primary goal is to establish and maintain a healthy co-parenting relationship by reducing parental conflict and other risk factors that influence a child's post-divorce adjustment. Parents are coached on how to develop a supportive, business-like partnership and to foster an environment of respect, consideration, and empathy. Parents will have an opportunity to learn about developmental needs of children (and human nature in general) in the context of relationships.

Parent coordination and parent facilitation are based on the assumption that *both* parents are "*good enough*" parents; thus there is no need for shame and blame. As your PC or PF, I will not be the judge of "who is right and who is wrong." Neither will I make recommendations for changes with regards to the access and possession of your child(ren). I will serve as a reflector, illuminating the roadblocks to effective co-parenting. I will provide each parent with direct feedback about your own contributions to any continued conflict. The focus of parent facilitation / parent coordination is child-centered, future-oriented and intended to clarify needs for all parties moving forward.

### **What's the Difference between Parent Coordination and Parent Facilitation?**

**Parent Coordination (PC)** is a form of dispute resolution established to assist high-conflict parents who have demonstrated an inability or unwillingness to make parenting decisions on their own (without relying on

the legal system). PC in Texas was established as a part of the alternative dispute resolution process; therefore, all records are maintained in confidence. Any information obtained / discussed in individual or joint sessions with parents *may not be disclosed or utilized in court*. In fact, as your Parent Coordinator, the only information I am permitted to disclose to the court is a recommendation as to whether or not parenting coordination should continue.

**Parent Facilitation (PF)** is a non-confidential form of dispute resolution established to assist high-conflict parents who have demonstrated an inability or unwillingness to make parenting decisions without relying on the legal system. If you are involved in litigation and are seeking the assistance of a parent facilitator, you can expect that the judge will ask for reports on your progress and all attorneys will want information regarding your work with me. As stated above, as your PF, I will not be the judge of "who is right and who is wrong." I will not make recommendations relating to possession and access of your child(ren). However, per mandate of Texas Family Code, when necessary I will make recommendations to the court regarding the health and welfare needs of your child(ren). Because of this, I will also meet with your child(ren) on occasion when necessary. Regarding reports, I will provide regular updates (as mandated by Texas Family Code and often in the form of "status reviews" provided directly to the court) about parent behavior and your participation in the parent facilitation process. The information on which I will report includes an assessment of:

1. Obstacles undermining an effective cooperative parenting relationship
2. Each parent's willingness to learn and apply the concepts provided throughout the PF process
3. Each parent's willingness to collaborate on the establishment of (child-centered) common goals
4. Each parent's ability to introspectively reflect on gains, setbacks, or roadblocks to established goals

The above list is not intended to be an exhaustive list of areas upon which I will report to the Court. It is intended to provide you with a general idea of the nature of my focus-- which is very much on the *process* rather than *content* of the co-parenting relationship.