



C O - P A R E N T I N G T O A N E W B E G I N N I N G

The CFI (Child and Family Investigator) vs. PRE (Parental Responsibility Evaluator) dilemma—this issue was recently discussed at one of the MDIC luncheons, and has been debated for the last few years.

Which cases are better for a CFI and which cases are more appropriate for a PRE to complete?

Most people will probably choose the least expensive path of the CFI in hopes that they can get enough data for a limited cost. If the question they need answered is simple, then they are probably right. Here is the rub, is the basic question really that simple? Joint vs. sole decision making? Design a parenting plan for the family. Which school system better serves the children? It might seem simple, but it might be complex. In theory the CFI will spend about 10 hours collecting data and another 5 to 10 writing a report. Is that amount of time and effort enough for the family? Without the aid of psychological evaluations or substance abuse or DV reports, are the recommendations solid? If the evaluator can get a good sense about what is happening in the family, then the CFI path might be the cost effective method to choose.

The PRE can be costly but it is also much more thorough. It is not uncommon for a CFI to get involved in a case only to find that he/she needs to ask the court for more funding, or further reporting and evaluation. In the end, the client has paid far more than the \$2,000 cap.

The PRE can do psychological testing. Abuse evaluations can come into play as can detailed accounts and interviews with neutral third parties. What will truly serve the client the best? Out of state or removal cases may be better suited for the PRE. If there are multiple parties involved, grandparents, etc., who want parenting time, then a PRE may be the better alternative.

Cases with a lot of children who range in ages may be better for the PRE. Abuse cases or situations where a parties' mental health is being questioned deserve the chance for a psychological evaluation, thus a PRE should be hired. When multiple questions are being asked of the reporter, perhaps the PRE is the better route to go. Each case is individual as is the decision to hire a CFI or a PRE.

Finally, if the cost was taken out of the picture, what would really serve the client and their family the best? Can the case move forward with a CFI or does it really deserve a PRE?

Currently taking both CFI and PRE cases on a limited basis.

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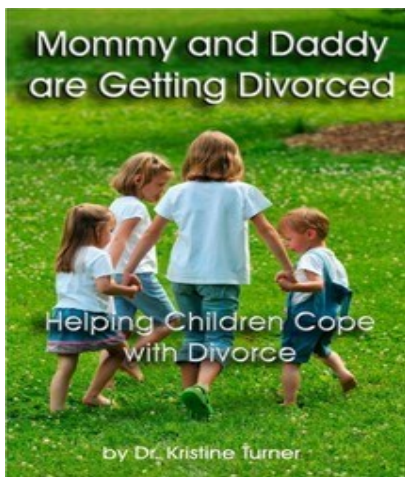
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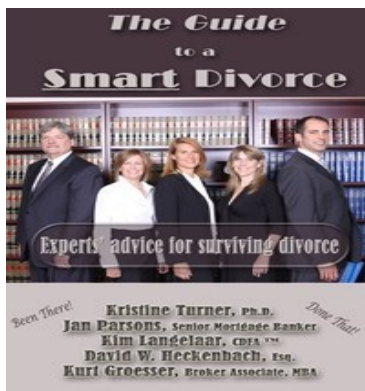
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