

# Donald LaFave Mediation & Counseling, LLC

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Dear Family Law Attorney:

This letter outlines the procedures for a legal custody/physical placement study by my office.

## **Fees and Payment:**

Comprehensive Custody Evaluation: \$1,000

Expedited Evaluations: See Below

Limited, Focused Evaluation: \$600

The fee is due payable in the form of a cashier's check before any work is done on the case.

## **Expedited Evaluations:**

Studies requiring less than 60 days to complete are available on a limited basis. Please call my office to confirm my availability to meet any deadline the court may set for your case. The fee for an expedited study will be established on a case by case basis, with consideration given to the time constraints involved and the complexity of the case.

## **Limited, Focused Evaluations:**

A Limited, Focused Evaluation (taking 2-4 weeks) is a rapid response custody evaluation for limited, focused issues, temporary orders, or non-complicated cases in which parents want expert input into their decision making on custody issues. This type of evaluation is designed to provide rapid recommendations about specific issues in dispute.

## **Scheduling Appointments:**

Once the cashier's check is received, my office will call the parties to set up their appointments. It is more efficient for my office to schedule the appointments directly rather than relying on their attorney's offices.

Please instruct your clients to phone my office at (262)637-8288. Please also instruct them that it is very important that they make themselves and their children available for appointments as early as possible and avoid cancellations, because rescheduling may cause a serious delay in completing the study.

If there is a restraining order in effect at the time of the evaluation, please notify my office promptly, so we can make appropriate modifications in our procedures to assure the parties will not come into contact with each other.

## **Informed Consent:**

During the first evaluation session, the parties will be asked to sign the enclosed informed consent form, which also will be discussed with them in person.

**Preparation of Children for the Study:**

The parties should inform the children in advance that they will be meeting with a social worker. The children should be told that the social worker is trying to help their mother and father make a good plan for taking care of them and will meet with them alone to talk about how they think and feel about things in their family.

**Material Submitted:**

The parties or their attorneys may submit materials for me to review as long as the other party's counsel is also provided with copies of the materials. Any materials submitted will be reviewed. My office is not responsible for seeing that the other party's counsel is also provided with copies of the materials. Do not submit original materials.

**Home Visits:**

Home visits may be done depending on the issues of the case and either parties request or because of my decision that information is needed.

**Length of Study Process:**

The goal is to finish the study within eight to twelve weeks of the first appointment. In order to do this, the parties must make themselves available to come to appointments according to a particular schedule.

**Reporting of Results:**

In many cases I will give an oral presentation to the parties and their attorneys of the results from interviews and other means. In addition, a written report will be released to the court. The report will discuss the conclusions reached as a result of the study and will give detailed recommendations.

Unless otherwise agreed upon, any discussions among the parties and attorneys during an oral presentation is not confidential. After the presentation results, the parties and their attorneys may meet with me. My file and all notes will be available for inspection.

**Testimony:**

If my testimony is needed, please provide as much notice as possible and schedule me for a given day or half-day. I regularly appear at hearings before Family Court Commissioners and frequently testify at trials before Circuit Court Judges. Providing ample notice of your trial date and the need for my testimony will reduce the likelihood of a scheduling conflict.

Please call me if there are any questions.

Yours very truly,

Donald E. LaFave, Social Worker  
Donald LaFave Mediation & Counseling, LLC.