

## A NOTE TO PARENTS:

As a separating or divorcing parent, you may have a lot of questions on your mind. How do you and the other parent make decisions about your children? How are you going to communicate with the other parent when there is so much tension between you? How are you going to keep your children from being harmed by the divorce? How do you negotiate the Family Court process?

Nancy Darcy has over 20 years experience as a custody evaluator, mediator and child psychologist. Through her work at Hennepin County Family Court Services, she has provided divorce related services to hundreds of families and is known for helping parents feel that they have been heard, understood and their children's needs have been addressed.

# Services

## BRIEF FOCUSED EVALUATIONS AND CHILD PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSESSMENTS

*Similar to full-scope evaluations in most respects, focused evaluations, parenting assessments and child psychological assessments gather information from observations, testing, collaterals, and records.*

However, the scope is limited to a specific issue, such as parenting, parent/child relationship, child attachment, mental health of the child or parents, or chemical health as it impacts parenting. Due to the limited scope, it may not be appropriate for the evaluator to make custody recommendations.

The benefit of a limited scope assessment is less time and cost involved. The information gathered is often instrumental in helping parents reach a negotiated settlement or limiting the issues to be litigated.

## MEDIATION

*A mediator works with parents and attorneys to identify issues underlying their dispute. A mediator helps parents come up with creative and satisfying solutions that avoid or minimize litigation. Mediation can be used at any time, even before parents separate.*

Mediation is a process that empowers parents and can enhance their communication and cooperation well into their children's future. Attorneys may take part in the process, but the process itself is considered confidential and outside the litigation process.

A mediator should be knowledgeable and skilled in conflict management, interpersonal and family dynamics and the developmental needs of children. A skilled mediator supports parents in making constructive, child-centered decisions.

## PARENTING CONSULTING (PC)

*Parents may find themselves unable to make timely decisions regarding their children because they are continually locked in conflict with the other parent.*

Parents may choose to use a parenting consultant who can facilitate respectful communication and child-centered decision making. The PC may coach the parents towards a more constructive co-parenting relationship, working with parents individually or jointly. When necessary, the PC assists the family by making clear, prompt decisions on issues in dispute.

PC's are appointed by the Court by agreement of the parents and work under a contract that describes the scope of their services.

## EARLY NEUTRAL EVALUATIONS (ENE)

*ENE's provide parents with an opportunity to avoid lengthy litigation using a process that combines evaluation and mediation.*

A male and female team create a positive atmosphere where parents present what they want for their children and why. The team then gives parents feedback as to the strengths and shortcoming of their proposed shared parenting arrangements. After the parents have some time to process the information, the ENE team facilitates settlement negotiations.

Although attorneys are most often present, Pro se parties can take part in ENE's. Like mediation, ENE's are confidential and the process is outside the litigation process.

## REUNIFICATION THERAPY

*Parent/child reunification therapy aims at helping parents and children reestablish a healthy and positive relationship when there has been a breach and the child is resisting contact with the parent.*

The estranged parent may have been absent for an extended time, the child may have been exposed to abuse or inappropriate parenting or the child may have been influenced to turn against or fear the parent without good reason.

The reunification therapist creates a safe environment that allows parents and children to get beyond the anxiety, hurt, anger and resentment.

Through establishing ground rules, clear expectations, and coaching, parents and children can accomplish healthy expression of feelings and respectful communication. The goal is to establish long-term parenting time arrangements that are optimal for the child's needs.

## CUSTODY AND PARENTING TIME EVALUATIONS

*In complex cases with numerous allegations that need to be addressed, an evaluation may be the best means to sort out what parenting arrangements are in the best interest of the children.*

A well-crafted custody evaluation can be instrumental in helping parents reach a settlement before trial or enable a judge make a well-informed decision.

An evaluator gathers a great deal of information from multiple meetings with the family, psychological assessments, collateral sources and reviewing pertinent records.

A final report should integrate all the information in a way that flows to conclusions and recommendations that address custody, parenting time schedules, how major decisions will be made, and processes for resolving future problems that may arise.

A thorough and astute evaluator can be trusted to make recommendations that are well grounded and ensure that children's needs are met. In the end, parents need to feel they and their children have been heard and understood.

## NANCY DARCY, M.A.

Licensed Psychologist

*Custody and Parenting Time Specialist*



*Nancy Darcy* is a Licensed Psychologist, with 20 years experience doing Family Court work including many hundreds of custody and parenting time evaluations, mediations, Early Neutral Evaluations and parent/child assessments. In her work as a child psychologist, she conducted child psychological evaluations, parent/child reunification therapy and structured parent/child observations that identify critical aspects of parenting. She provided consultation to professional staff, Guardian ad Litem and judicial officers.

Nancy is Rule 114 Certified on the Supreme Court Roster for neutral professionals. She has extensive experience helping parents develop parenting plans, mediating, and holding settlement conferences as a way to avoid lengthy litigation.

Nancy was advanced to Ph.D. candidacy in Psychology and earned Master's Degrees from the University of Michigan and the State University of New York at Stony Brook. She has extensive training and experience in child development, chemical dependency domestic abuse and mental health.

Nancy is a member of the Association of Family & Conciliation Courts, and the Minnesota Association of Custody Resolution Specialists.

## SERVICES

Custody And Parenting Time Evaluations  
Brief Focused Evaluations  
Mediation  
Parenting Consulting  
Parent Coaching  
Parent/Child Reunification Therapy  
Parenting Assessments  
Child Psychological Assessments  
Structured Parent/Child Observations  
Early Neutral Evaluations



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# FAMILIES

*Separated, But Not Broken*



## NANCY DARCY, M.A.

Licensed Psychologist

*Specializing in Custody and Parenting  
Time Issues*