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North Texas Family Services
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Dear Client,

I have been appointed by the Court to complete a child custody evaluation regarding you and your family. I understand that this process can feel stressful and emotional. This letter is intended to help you understand what to expect, what will be needed, and the general guidelines that will help this process go smoothly.

Purpose of the Evaluation

The goal of a custody evaluation is to understand how each parent supports their child's physical, emotional, and social development and to make recommendations to the Court regarding what appears to be in the child's best interests. My role is neutral. I do not represent, defend, or advocate for either parent. I am appointed by the Court to gather and assess information objectively and to provide the Court with a thorough professional recommendation. You and the other parent will each have equal opportunities to participate in interviews, submit materials, and share your perspectives. I will not make any recommendations until the entire evaluation is complete, and those recommendations will only be made through a formal written report to the Court.

My Role and Boundaries

I serve as a neutral evaluator, not as a therapist, counselor, or mediator. After the final report is submitted, I do not continue working with either parent unless the Court specifically orders an update. I can answer questions about procedures and scheduling, but any legal or custody-related questions should be directed to your attorney.

How to Talk to Your Children About the Evaluation

You can help your children prepare by explaining that the evaluator is someone who talks to families to help parents make decisions about how to take care of them. Please do not tell your children that I will decide where they will live or that they must choose between parents. That is not part of their role or mine and can place undue stress on them. Children will not be asked which parent they prefer or where they want to live.

Basic Guidelines for All Participants

To keep the process organized, fair, and respectful, please follow these guidelines:



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1. Be honest and cooperative. Dishonesty or withholding information can delay or harm the evaluation.
2. No recordings. Audio or video recordings of any part of the process, including calls, interviews, or virtual meetings, are strictly prohibited.
3. Be respectful and on time. Missed or late appointments may result in additional fees.
4. Communicate professionally. Communication may occur by email, phone, or text message for logistical purposes. The evaluator honors normal business hours of Monday through Friday, 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Messages received outside business hours will be addressed on the next business day.
5. Notify my office immediately of any changes in your contact information, attorney representation, or household members.

Appointments and Scheduling

Your first appointment will be scheduled after your payment and paperwork are received in full. Scheduling is not dependent on the other party's participation or payment. The first appointment is an individual interview. The second appointment includes all family members, including the child or children. Additional sessions, if required, will incur additional costs. Virtual appointments can be approved on a case-by-case basis.

If you need to reschedule, please contact the office as soon as possible. Cancellations made within 24 hours of your appointment may result in a charge for one hour of evaluator time.

Before Your First Appointment

To begin the evaluation, please complete the following steps:

1. Review and sign the Advisement Form. Discuss any questions with your attorney before signing.
2. Submit payment in full before scheduling. Payment options include:
 - Check payable to Lauren Gordon, LCSW-S
 - Zelle to NTXFamilyServices
 - Venmo to @laurenbgordon
 - Square payment link: <https://square.link/u/TQf9MJ4T>
3. Complete and send the following items:
 - Completed Personal History Questionnaire (each adult in the home completes their form)
 - Signed Release of Information Form(s)
 - Copy of a valid ID for each adult in the home
 - School or daycare records (current and previous report cards)
 - Medical records, including the most recent well-child exam
 - Employment verification (letter, pay stub, or W-2)



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- Minimum four completed Parenting Reference Questionnaires (sent directly from your references to me)
- Upload any relevant documents, such as CPS letters, therapy notes, school evaluations, or other materials, to your designated Google Drive link.

All forms and instructions are available at www.ntxfamilyservices.com/custody-evaluations. All documentation must be submitted before your first appointment can be confirmed.

Sharing Information and Releases

If you have worked with professionals such as teachers, doctors, or therapists who may have relevant information, please complete a release form so that I can contact them. Provide only the materials that are directly relevant to this case.

Conflicts of Interest

If you believe that I or my staff have ever worked with you, your family, or anyone involved in this case in the past, please notify me immediately. Any potential conflicts will be disclosed to all parties and the Court.

During the Evaluation

You and the other parent may have different perspectives on events, which is expected. My job is to verify important information and assess how each parent's choices, relationships, and environment affect the children's well-being. The focus of this process is not who is right, but how each parent's actions support the children's best interests.

Final Thoughts

I understand this process can be challenging, and my goal is to make it as clear and respectful as possible. Your honesty, preparation, and cooperation are essential.

If you have questions about scheduling, forms, or documentation, please contact my office at 945-354-3115 or email laurengordon@ntxfamilyservices.com. For legal questions or concerns, please contact your attorney directly.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Sincerely,
Lauren Gordon, LCSW-S
North Texas Family Services