

FAMILY SOLUTIONS

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Family Needs Consultation

What is a Family Needs Consultation?

Family Needs Consultation (FNC) is a brief consultation designed to provide information to parents about how they can better meet the needs of their children as the family adjusts to separation and divorce. It begins with a review of written intake information and is followed by a half day of interviews and discussion. Feedback will be provided verbally. A FNC may be closed (confidential) or open (non-confidential).

Why refer for a FNC?

A FNC can be helpful at the beginning of a separation to preempt entrenched conflict and to minimize litigation. Based on our many years of experience and the social science literature, we provide guidance that addresses many of the common questions facing separating parents. These questions include how can parents best talk to children the family transition, what are developmentally appropriate parenting time schedules, what parenting plans would be most helpful to the family, how can parent-child contact problems be resolved, how can the family be assisted in adapting to changes, and what can be done about mental health or substance abuse problems. In addition, we provide information about various dispute resolution alternatives and may offer suggestions regarding which one of these is likely to best fit the family needs and circumstances.

How to refer for a FNC?

A referral may be made by a parent, the court or the lawyers. Once both parents consent to a FNC, or it is ordered by the court, the parents are asked to complete intake questionnaires and the required consent forms. These are reviewed by the team before the interview. Usually, we do not read court documentation although we may read relevant professional reports. If the parents have lawyers, at least one team member will consult with them prior to the FNC to clarify the mandate and purpose of the intervention.

What happens after the referral and intake?

On the day of the interviews, two members of the team interview the parents, either together or separately, while other team members observe from behind the one-way mirror. The team may also meet with the children, and this will be decided prior to the consultation. The interviewers may confer with the observing team members to discuss the family. One or more of the observing team members may briefly join the interview to obtain clarification or give direction.

Feedback and follow up – What is the outcome?

The team meets at the conclusion of the interview to develop feedback and any alternatives for the parents' consideration. This feedback is then shared with the parents orally. Members of the Family Solutions Team may be available to work with the family to assist with the implementation of services and interventions. We are also available to refer the family to other individuals or groups capable of providing similar specialized services. In either case, it is our hope that the parents leave the consultation with a clearer understanding of their children's needs and with some tools and action steps that will assist them to better meet these needs.

What does the FNC cost?

The fee for the initial consultation is \$2,000.00. In some cases, additional meeting(s) by a team member may be required. There is a charge of \$225.00 per hour per clinician to cover any further services such as interviews, an additional feedback meeting or a report.