

**THE SUPERIOR COURT OF CALIFORNIA
COUNTY OF EL DORADO**

OFFICE OF CHILD CUSTODY RECOMMENDING COUNSELING

495 MAIN STREET
PLACERVILLE, CA 95667
(530) 621-6426

1354 JOHNSON BLVD.
SOUTH LAKE TAHOE, CA 96150
(530) 573-3075

Dear Parents:

An appointment for child custody recommending counseling has been set for you by the Court or the Family Law Clerk because your court documents indicate that a dispute exists between you concerning custody and/or visitation. The following information will be helpful in preparing for your appointment.

**DO NOT BRING ANY CHILDREN TO THE CCRC APPOINTMENT
UNLESS ORDERED BY THE COURT**

**YOU MUST COMPLETE ONLINE ORIENTATION PRIOR TO YOUR CCRC APPOINTMENT
GO TO: WWW.ELDORADOCOURT.ORG/DIVISIONS/CCRC.HTML**

Complete sections 2.1 through 2.4. This will take approximately 30-40 minutes.

What is child custody recommending counseling?

The Superior Court believes that parents can make the best decision about a parenting plan for their children. The child custody recommending counseling session is an opportunity for parents to discuss issues and make decisions which are in the best interest of their children. This is an alternative to an expensive and adversarial court battle.

Sometimes, when people get into a courtroom, they let their bitterness and hostility take over. When people are in such a setting, they may lock themselves into positions which they later regret. Child custody recommending counseling offers an opportunity to set aside these feelings in order to minimize the traumatic effect of the divorce on those who matter most - your children.

The focus of child custody recommending counseling will be on developing agreements which spell out when the children are to be with each parent and specify other parental responsibilities. Child Custody Recommending Counselors are impartial professionals who help parents reach agreements regarding their children.

The Child Custody Recommending Counselor will notify the court of areas of agreement. If an agreement is not reached, the Child Custody Recommending Counselor may make follow-up calls to gather additional information, and may obtain police or sheriff reports and Department of Justice criminal history reports. Your children may be interviewed at the Child Custody Recommending Counselor's discretion. The Child Custody Recommending Counselor will then make recommendations to the court as to what is believed to be in the best interest of the children. Public policy in California is to assure children frequent and continuing contact with both parents and to encourage parents to share the benefits and obligations of child rearing.

No party or attorney for a party shall initiate contact with a Child Custody Recommending Counselor/Evaluator, orally or in writing, to discuss the merits of the case without notice to the other party and an opportunity to be present or to receive a copy of a written communication. Telephone calls to a Child Custody Recommending Counselor after the child custody recommending counseling appointment will not be accepted unless the Child Custody Recommending Counselor has requested specific information. You must file all documents that you want considered by the Child Custody Recommending Counselor in your court file.

What are the limitations of child custody recommending counseling?

Child custody recommending counseling does NOT deal with issues related to money, child or spousal support, or property issues. These should be discussed with your attorney.

Do NOT bring your children with you for the child custody recommending counseling appointment unless ordered to do so by the Court. If an interview with the children is needed, arrangements will be made for this at a later time.

Please be prepared to meet with the Child Custody Recommending Counselor for up to two hours. The child custody recommending counseling appointment cannot be cancelled or rescheduled without service on the other party. It is important for both parties to be present at the child custody recommending counseling appointment. Failure to appear for the appointment may result in the Court making orders without input from you.

The Child Custody Recommending Counselor cannot monitor or enforce court orders. It is expected that both parties will comply with the custody schedule and will work out any differences regarding the schedule which may occur. If parties do not comply with orders of the Court, legal action may be required. For additional information, contact an attorney.

Are both parties always seen together in the child custody recommending counseling session?

In the majority of cases, both parents meet jointly with the Child Custody Recommending Counselor. However, the parties will be seen separately if there is a history of abuse or violence or if there is a domestic violence restraining order and you request separate sessions by marking the appropriate box on the questionnaire. You may also request to have a neutral, uninvolved party present as a support person during the child custody recommending counseling appointment. Please inform the Family Law Clerk when you set your appointment and the Child Custody Recommending Counselor when you arrive for your appointment of your request.

Important!

Please remember, the parties are not the only ones dealing with this proceeding. Your children are going through it too. Keep your children in mind. This may help you better manage the hurt, anger, and other feelings you have. Think about what you are portraying to your children. It is hard for them to understand what is going on. Be honest with yourselves and each other and work together to constructively develop a parenting plan which is in the best interest of your children.

You can read more information about child custody by reading: *Child Custody Information Sheet – Recommending Counseling (Form FL-313-INFO)*. Read this form if your case is in a county where there is "child custody recommending counseling." The *Child Custody Information Sheet* is available on the California Courts website at <http://www.courts.ca.gov/documents/fl313info.pdf> or at the Court.