



Parenting Coordination

A Child Centred Approach

Lorri Yasenik PhD and **Jon Graham LLB** present a course that provides theory and skills and for practitioners who wish to learn about the role of Child-Centred Parenting Coordination.

This 30-hour course consists of three face-to-face days with an additional self-paced on-line component.

Key Elements

- Parenting Coordination Step-by-Step
- Structured and managed process orientation
- Directive roles of the PC
- Standardized protocols for being child centred
- When and how to include children and youth
- Child-Centred with Family Systems Focus
- Substantive topics such as estrangement, alienation and dysregulation
- Standardized practitioner tools

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What Is Parenting Coordination?

Parenting Coordination is a child-centred dispute resolution process that is particularly appropriate for parents who are in high conflict post separation and divorce. PC offers a structured dispute resolution process for an extended duration and is appropriate for parents who need ongoing assistance in following their parenting plans or who need small parenting plan adjustments over time. In some cases, Parenting Coordinators assist post separated parents to develop their initial parenting plans.

Parenting Coordination is an on-record, “With-Prejudice” process that is a structured mental health, DR process that combines assessment, education, case management, conflict management, negotiation and, when necessary, decision-making functions (arbitration). Parenting Coordinators have extensive experience and qualifications to work with restructuring family systems post separation and divorce.

Child Centred Parenting Coordination embraces the international intentionality of providing family law processes that are inclusive of the views and concerns of children. Specific strategies must be employed when bringing forward a child voice in “on the record” processes.

AFCC Parenting Coordination Guidelines

In 2019 the Association of Family Conciliation Courts (USA) released new Guidelines for the Practice of Parenting Coordination in Family Law. While not enforceable, these Guidelines are internationally respected as the benchmark for practitioners and trainers of practitioners in North America and across the world.

Training of Parenting Coordinators therefore should:

- Be offered by senior members of the dispute resolution community
- Be offered a 30 to 40-hour training program

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- Have entry requirements including previous training in mediation, family law, family systems, child development, family violence, and high conflict management skills.

Some Parenting Coordination approaches integrate an Arbitration function. Parenting Coordinators who also arbitrate need to have undertaken a special course in Arbitration.

This 30-hour certificate course is intended for those who:

- Have been working in the field of separation and divorce for 2-5 years.**
- Have post Graduate Qualifications and registration as a Social Worker, Psychologist, Psychotherapist, Legal Practitioner, Family Mediator or Family Dispute Resolution Practitioner**
- Have basic education in conflict resolution, negotiation, communication, interest-based mediation and mediation skills.**

Course Objectives

- 1) Describe the multifaceted role of the Parenting Coordinator
- 2) Identify how and when to include children and also how to make use of the Child and Youth Concerns Scale
- 3) Create a structured approach to managing the PC role including strategies to assist parents in high conflict
- 4) Describe how and when to record session content and how to develop a contract that addresses the necessary components for the PC process
- 5) Explain the role of Arbitrator as part of the PC role and compare and contrast PC with Arbitration and PC without Arbitration.
- 6) Describe the inclusion of children and identify developmental issues and special ways to include children in a safe and appropriate manner
- 7) Identify family systems in relation to high conflict
- 8) Describe how and when to use the Parent Readiness Scale and how to work with dis-regulated clients
- 9) Identify alienation factors and management strategies
- 10) Apply domestic violence screening and assessment and identify how to work with power imbalances
- 11) Identify ethics and ethical dilemmas through case examples and small group exercises

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- 12) Demonstrate role-plays and small group exercises in order to enhance practical skills needed by the Parenting Coordinator.

At the end of this training the participant will be able to:

- Explain the Parenting Coordination steps and process
- Describe the role of the Parenting Coordinator
- Utilize strategies to elicit the child voice safely in a Parenting Coordination process
- Prepare written summaries of other pertinent documents
- Maintain ethical practice in On the Record Processes

Course Content

SELF-PACED LEARNING (ON-LINE)

Completed Prior To Face-To-Face Training

Lesson 1: Introduction

- Course Introduction
- On Record Processes (Non-Confidential)
- AFCC Standards For Parenting Coordination
- History of Parenting Coordination
 - The Californian Beginnings and Spread in North America
 - The International Movement

Lesson 2: THEORETICAL OVERVIEW

- Legal foundation; Family Law, Procedural Fairness
- Mental Health; Family Systems, Child Development, Attachment
- Mediation; High Conflict, Negotiation
- Education; Parenting After Separation, Disengagement from the Couple Relationship
- Consultation; Engaging with Other Practitioners, Building a Collaborative Space.
- The WISE™ Approach to Case Management
 - Family Violence Assessment
 - Whole of Family Safety in the Context of Parenting Coordination
 - Managing complex family issues/dynamics

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- Case conceptualization/ review

Lesson 3: DEFINING ROLES

- Role of the Parenting Coordinator
- Article Review:
 - The Continuum of Including Children in ADR Processes: A Child-Centred Continuum Model (Family Court Review 2016)
 - The Voice of the Child in Parenting Coordination (Family Court Review 2020)

Lesson 4: CHILD DEVELOPMENT AND FAMILY SYSTEMS IN PRACTICE

- The four areas of consideration when meeting a child or youth
- Inclusive definitions of family, clan and kin
- Introduction to the Wheel of Child Development

Lesson 5: ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

- Ethical practice in Child-Centred Practice
- Limits of Confidentiality in On the Record Processes
- Staying within Skills and Knowledge
- Maintaining role clarity
- Safety and harm

FACE TO FACE TRAINING

INTRODUCTION TO PARENTING COORDINATION

- Overview of the Parenting Coordination Approach
 - Parenting Coordination definition
 - What is typically addressed in PC?
 - Role play examples
 - Case Example Review

PARENTING COORDINATION PROCESS

- Referrals to PC
 - What is an appropriate referral?
 - What is an inappropriate referral?
- Parenting Coordination Step by Step:
 - Setting the Stage: Parameters of the PC Contract, Developing a Contract to fit your practice/ Jurisdiction
 - Tailoring the process to the particular needs of the case
 - The initial session and preparing the parties for the process

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- Scheduling the time and location, and establishing the format of each conference and focusing discussion
- Structuring and managing the discussion, maintaining control of the sessions, and utilizing appropriate case management skills
- Managing separate sessions, telephonic and e-mail communication
- Maintaining appropriate records and documentation as a PC

PRACTICE CONSIDERATIONS

- Safe practice
 - Parenting Coordination where there is a history of violence or abuse
 - Creating a safe structure
 - Case study
- Introduction to Court Ordered PC:
 - Court ordered Parenting Coordination
 - Working with Lawyers/Attorneys
- PC Authority: With or without Arbitration
 - PC with arbitration
 - PC without arbitration
 - Assisting parents to creating an appropriate Consent Order
- Parenting plans

CHILDREN, PARENTS AND THE FAMILY SYSTEMS

- Parenting roles and functions
 - Co-parenting and good enough parenting (parenting in parallel)
 - Attachment and attachment interruptions
 - Family break-up story
- Children in Post Separation
 - Impact of separation and divorce on children
 - Risk assessments for children
 - What do children say about what they need?
 - Vulnerabilities and Resiliencies
 - Temperament
- Roles children play in family Estrangement
 - Indicators of estrangement
 - Management of estrangement in parenting coordination
 - Forming a safe meaningful relationship
- Alienation
 - Indicators of alienation

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- Management of alienation in parenting coordination
- Forming a safe meaningful relationship
- Impacts of the extra-familial issues; step parents, extended family and grandparents, friends
- Use of the Child and Youth Concerns Scale
- Case Examples and role-play skills building exercise
- Conflict, High Conflict and Hatred
 - Understanding the nuances of high conflict separations and divorces
 - High conflict styles
 - High conflict and impasse
 - Family systems and high conflict: separated families and extended families
 - Reactive and entrenched hatred
 - Use of the Parent Readiness Scale
- Case example(s) and Role-play skills building exercise
 - Small and large group debrief

STRATEGIES AND INTERVENTIONS IN PARENTING COORDINATION

- Managing the Process
 - Goal-setting
 - Setting the stage
 - Identifying the level of structure needed to assist the parties
- Managing different issues – special interventions/strategies
 - Individual sessions, caucusing, shuttle strategies
 - Coaching
- How and when to include the children
 - Setting the stage for child inclusion
 - Strategies for safe inclusion
 - Meeting with children strategies
 - The Child Centred Continuum Approach
 - Developmental considerations
 - Bringing feedback to parents
- The arbitration function:
 - Arbitration Role: How and when to initiate this role?
- Recording and Managing the Process
 - Maintaining session notes and report writing
 - Drafting Awards

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- Dysregulation in Parenting Coordination
 - Advanced use of the Parent Readiness Scale; working from a strengths base
 - Review of parent profile
- Managing communication
 - Use of a communications log
- Managing complaints
 - Internal complaints
 - Complaints to associations

Materials

Participants will be provided with a training manual, bibliography and current articles for study and review. Review of videos and role play materials will be provided.

ICCFL Certification

This course is offered as a Certificate of Attendance Program comprising 24 hours of face to face teaching, with a further 6 hours of online self-paced learning.

Why Study With ICCFL?

Lorri Yasenik PhD has over 25yrs experience in the practice of Child-Centred Parenting Coordination and Arbitration, and Child-Inclusive Mediation. Lorri brings the experience of the North American approaches to Parenting Coordination and Child-centered Mediation that include both the successes and pitfalls associated with these roles. Lorri's background of registered child and play therapist and of international trainer of play therapists and child psychotherapists adds to the focus of safe and non-tokenistic inclusion of children in "on and off record" processes.

Jon Graham LLB, has over 25yrs experience in the practice of Mediation (FDRP), training and supervision of Mediators nationally and internationally. Jon brings the experience of the Family Relationships Centres and the evolution of best practice(s) in Dispute Resolution in Australia. Jon has dedicated much of his career to the study of domestic violence and its'

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impact on the family system including the impact on children. Jon is a Child-Centred Family Mediator and draws on 15yrs experience of working with complex youth.

In 2019 Lorri and Jon were invited contributors to a Family Court Review Special Issue focused on Parenting Coordination. The article, published in 2020, focuses on Child Centred Parenting Coordination and is the first of its kind in the Parenting Coordination literature. Lorri and Jon have trained professionals in the *Meeting With Children* approach (which is a child-centred model of child inclusion) in Canada, USA, UK, Hong Kong and Australia.

Bridging Programs

Bridging Programs are available to assist participants to gain the entry skills necessary to become a Parenting Coordinator. Programs are offered in a combination of online and face to face formats and include:

- Family Mediation Skills
- Family Systems, Child Development and Attachment
- Family Violence, Screening Risk Assessment and Safety Planning

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