

GUIDELINES FOR THE CONDUCTING OF VIEWS OF THE CHILD ASSESSMENTS

WATERMAN & ASSOCIATES

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We recognize that, from time to time, a Psychologist will be asked to provide a Views of the Child Assessment. When conducting such assessments, it is recognized that they are based on limited information which results in limitations must be clearly stated by the Psychologist within the body of the report.

The purpose of conducting such an assessment is to: obtain the opinion of the child; determine whether or not the child has reached the opinion on her/his own; and assess whether the child recognizes and understands the consequences of her/his decision.

Generally, only limited information will be obtained from the parents/parental individuals in the child's life when conducting such assessments. If information is obtained from one parental individual, the same opportunity will be provided to the other parental individual. Such information should be limited to the "historical facts" in the matter related to the child's opinion as perceived by each parent/parental individual. The Psychologist may choose to obtain the information from the legal counsel representing each parent/parental individual in written form or obtain the information directly from the parent/parental individual. Whichever option is chosen, that option must be clearly documented in the report. If information is obtained directly from the parents, the interview will be limited (60-90 minutes).

When interviewing the child, the Psychologist will assess the following areas:

- i) What is the child's understanding of the current situation that resulted in the interview taking place?
- ii) What is the child's opinion about the current situation regarding each parent/parental individual?
- iii) Is the child aware of what each parent/parental individual thinks about the current situation?
- iv) Does the child's opinion appear to have been unduly influenced by one or more of the parental individuals?
- v) Is the child able to state what she/he thinks will be the consequences of her/his opinion as far as each of the parental individuals is concerned?
- vi) Is the child able to state the reasons for her/his opinion concerning the present situation regarding their parents?
- vii) Are there any other areas of significance such as physical health, relationship concerns, psychological difficulties, learning disabilities, a history of abuse, or other factors that need to be considered when assessing the child's opinion?

When conducting such assessments, it is anticipated that the child will not require any formal psychological assessment. However, if certain areas are identified which may have an impact on the child's opinion (e.g., concerns about cognitive development, head injury), psychological testing may be completed to provide information relevant to that aspect. If psychological testing is conducted, the rationale for such testing will be stated.

The Psychologist completing such an assessment is expected to have the appropriate training and knowledge to conduct such assessments including but not necessarily limited to: child development; family systems theory; child psychopathology; learning disabilities; adult psychopathology; the impact of family violence; factors impacting on parent-child relationships; family systems theory; adult psychopathology; and the relevant legislation that applies to the child's situation.

The Psychologist must not make any recommendations based on an assessment of this type. The purpose of this assessment is to provide a psychological opinion about what the child is saying and to document any limitations or concerns that the Psychologist has identified that need to be considered regarding the child's statements regarding the current situation. Any opinion(s) or conclusion(s) made by the Psychologist will follow from the information obtained in the assessment process and the expertise of the Psychologist in the areas relevant to the assessment.

A Curriculum Vitae/Resume for the Psychologist will be attached to the report.