



Plaintiff

VS.

Defendant

**ORDER
(Best Interest Attorney)**

It is this _____ day of _____, _____, by the Circuit Court for _____ County, Maryland,

ORDERED, that _____, Esquire, (address and telephone number), be and the same is hereby appointed as, Best Interest Attorney for _____, born _____, minor child of the parties, to represent the best interests of said child in all matters relating to custody and visitation; such representation shall include consideration of the waiver (or not) of the psychiatric/psychological privilege for the aforesaid minor child, and may include requests for counseling and psychiatric evaluation; and it is further

ORDERED, that the Best Interest Attorney shall present the child's needs and wishes to the Court, but the overriding obligation of the Best Interest Attorney shall be to assist the Court in determining the best interest of the child; and it is further

ORDERED, that the Best Interest Attorney may do the following, if he or she deems appropriate:

- Meet with and interview the child, and advise the child of the scope of the representation.
- Investigate the relative abilities of the parties in their roles as parents or custodians.
- Visit the child in each home.
- Conduct individual interviews with parents, other parties, and collateral witnesses.
- Observe the child's interactions with each parent and each other party, individually.
- Review educational, medical, dental, psychiatric, psychological, or other records.
- Interview school personnel, childcare providers, healthcare providers, and mental health professionals involved with the child or family.
- File and respond to pleadings and motions.
- Participate in discovery.
- Participate in settlement negotiations.
- Participate in the trial, including calling witnesses and presenting evidence and argument, as appropriate.

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- If the child is to meet with the judge or testify, prepare the child, familiarizing the child with the places, people, procedures, and questioning that the child will be exposed to; and seek to minimize any harm to the child from the process.
- When the representation ends, the lawyer should inform the child in a developmentally appropriate manner.

HOWEVER, THE BEST INTEREST ATTORNEY SHALL NOT TESTIFY AT TRIAL OR FILE A WRITTEN REPORT WITH THE COURT.

And it is further, ORDERED, that Plaintiff shall advance to his attorney the sum of \$_____ to be placed in the Registry of the Court, subject to further Order of Court as to payment of the aforesaid appointed attorney's fees; and it is further

ORDERED, that Defendant shall advance to her attorney the sum of \$_____ to be placed in the Registry of the Court, subject to further Order of Court as to payment of the aforesaid appointed attorney's fees; and it is further

ORDERED, that this appointment, unless otherwise ordered by this Court, shall terminate after 30 days from the entry of a final Custody Order.

JUDGE, Circuit Court for

County, Maryland