

Sample Referral Questions for Psychological Custody Evaluations

Regarding parents

- 1) What are the strengths and weaknesses of the parents?
- 2) To what degree do the parents demonstrate empathy, attachment and judgment in relationship to their child?
- 3) Does either parent exhibit symptoms consistent with a particular psychiatric diagnosis (e.g., mental retardation, mental illness, substance abuse) that impacts the ability to effectively parent?
- 4) What is the level of cooperation of the parents with other professionals involved in the case and how open are they to suggestions for change?

Regarding children

- 1) What are the developmental and emotional needs of the child?
- 2) Does the child have special education, health or other needs that might impact a parenting plan?
- 3) How well do the parenting ability and styles fit with the child's needs?

Regarding the parents relationship with one another

- 1) Is there demonstrated capacity for cooperation?
- 2) What is the nature and intensity of disagreements over the child?
- 3) How do each feel about the involvement of the other in the child's life (e.g., are there deliberate efforts, subtle or otherwise, at alienating the child from the other parent)?

Potential for risk

- 1) Is there a history of violence?
- 2) What is the likelihood that an individual will pose a threat of danger to the child or the ex-partner?

What is the parenting plan that is most likely to optimally meet the child's needs?