

***Kawartha
Family
Court
Assessment
Service***

*Serving the City of Peterborough and the Counties of
Haliburton, Northumberland, Peterborough and City of
Kawartha Lakes*

Dear Parent/Guardian:

RE: CUSTODY/ACCESS ASSESSMENTS

You have been referred on a Court Order to our Agency for an assessment with respect to the custody and/or access of your child/children. This letter is intended to provide you with a brief outline of the assessment process.

You or your legal counsel will be provided with all the necessary documentation. You will be given a questionnaire which provides us with basic information from which we begin the assessment. Once the required deposit (if you are Legally Aided, no deposit is required), a signed Financial Undertaking, the Referral Form, the Parent Questionnaire and Issued Court Order are received, we will be contacting you with your initial appointment. There may be a waiting period before appointments can be scheduled, depending on the volume of referrals.

Both parents are seen, either individually or with their current partner, in two separate appointments that are between 2 and 3 hours in duration. In these sessions, your concerns, issues and feelings with respect to your child(ren) will be explored in depth as well as relevant background information. Both parents are then seen with the child(ren) in separate family sessions and a family play observation session at our office. Following each family session, the child(ren), if old enough, are interviewed separately. The contents of the child(ren)'s interviews are not revealed to either party, nor are the children quoted directly in the written report. This necessary ground rule is intended to help the children feel less concerned about how their statements might make their parents feel.

As part of the assessment process, information is obtained from other professionals, such as the child(ren)'s school and family physician, after Consent to Disclosure forms have been signed by the parents. Finally, if parents believe there are other important individuals who could provide helpful information, they can have the individual write out their information in a letter format and the individual may be contacted. In addition, parents are encouraged to provide any written information they believe would be helpful. A report is then written and submitted to all parties, including the Presiding Justice.

It is our experience and belief that the issues addressed in these assessments are generally both complex and of the highest importance to those involved. We, therefore, undertake these assessments with the intention of completing a thorough assessment and report.

You should also be aware that if appointments are not kept, you will be billed for the missed appointments, whether you are paying privately or through Legal Aid.

Please feel free to contact us with any questions or concerns you may have.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Dorothy Ryan". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looped initial "D".

Dorothy Ryan, M.S.W., R.S.W.
Executive Director