



Parenting Coordination

Frequently Asked Questions

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Our Parenting Coordinators



Judy Stewart

Our Director Judy Stewart is an Accredited Family Law Specialist and qualified Parenting Coordinator. After an earlier career in social work, Judy has practised exclusively in Family Law since 2003.

Since 2017, Judy has been recommended as a Leading Family and Divorce Lawyer on the Doyle's annual list of recommended lawyers.

Judy is a Nationally Accredited Mediator and registered Family Dispute Resolution Practitioner. Well-known for her pragmatic, organised and responsive manner, Judy takes a conciliatory approach to resolving disputes and actively encourages effective co-parenting.



Temika Slee

Our Associate Director Temika Slee has practised exclusively in family law since 2012 and has worked alongside Judy Stewart at Stewart Family Law since 2013. In addition to being a Parenting Coordinator, Temika is also an Accredited Family Law Specialist and Family Dispute Resolution Practitioner.

Temika sees Parenting Coordination as another valuable tool to assist families to resolve matters and avoid conflict. Temika appreciates that effective co-parenting doesn't automatically come hand in hand with a Court Order, or Parenting Plan, and in her role as a Parenting Coordinator strives to help parents with the difficult transition from being partners to co-parents and therefore improve their communication.

What does Parenting Coordination Cost?

Hourly rate for Parenting Coordination with Judy Stewart: \$500 per hour plus GST

Hourly rate for Parenting Coordination with Temika Slee: \$400 per hour plus GST

We request a deposit to cover the cost of your individual intake session.

Ongoing costs are usually shared between the parents (unless otherwise agreed).

Our usual policy is that all sessions are conducted by Microsoft Teams.

What is Parenting Coordination?

A Court Order or Parenting Plan doesn't always end the conflict and stress that parents are experiencing. Nor does a Court Order or Parenting Plan provide for all circumstances that arise when parenting children with an ex-partner.

A Parenting Coordinator (PC) assists separated parents to communicate effectively, manage conflict and resolve disputes related to parenting issues following a Court Order or Parenting Plan.

Parenting Coordinators have specialised training in family law, child development, and conflict resolution. The goal of a parenting coordinator is to promote cooperation between parents and improve outcomes for the children involved.

Is Parenting Coordination right for me?

The Parenting Coordination process is especially helpful for parents who:

- Are bound by court orders or a parenting plan but struggle to implement them peacefully;
- Have frequent disagreements over parenting logistics;
- Want to reduce their reliance on legal processes for resolving routine disputes;
- Are committed to improving co-parenting dynamics for the benefit of their children.

How does Parenting Coordination differ from other forms of dispute resolution?

Parenting Coordination differs from other dispute resolution methods, such as mediation, in both purpose and process. Unlike mediation, which typically involves a one-off session to help parties reach a new agreement, Parenting Coordination focuses on assisting parents to manage ongoing issues related to an existing Parenting Plan or Court Order. The aim is to facilitate communication and help resolve disputes as they arise, without the need for repeated Court or legal intervention.

A Parenting Coordinator does not have the authority to alter an existing Parenting Plan or Court Order. Their role is to assist in the practical implementation of those arrangements, while helping to minimise conflict between the parents. If you are seeking to change the care arrangements in your current Parenting Plan or Court Order, mediation may be more appropriate than Parenting Coordination.

If we are appointed as your Parenting Coordinator, we cannot act as your mediator. Likewise, if we act as your mediator, we cannot subsequently provide Parenting Coordination services.



Can I engage a Parenting Coordinator without a Parenting Plan or Court Order?

No. Parenting Coordination can only be conducted once there is a Court Order or Parenting Plan, as the purpose is to work together to cooperatively implement the terms of the Order or Parenting Plan in the best interests of the child/ren.

We work with parents who have a Parenting Plan, Interim Order or Final Order in place.

Does Parenting Coordination need to be Court Ordered?

No. While Parenting Coordination may be Court-ordered, parents can also voluntarily choose to engage a Parenting Coordinator to improve their co-parenting relationship and resolve disputes outside the Court system. Before you can engage a Parenting Coordinator, the other parent will also need to agree to their appointment, and there must be a current Parenting Plan or Court Order.

Can you act as my Parenting Coordinator if you have previously been involved with the family in any other capacity?

No. A Parenting Coordinator must remain impartial. If we have previously acted as your mediator or legal representative, we are unable to act as your Parenting Coordinator.

What is your process for Parenting Coordination?

You will need to provide our office with a copy of your Parenting Plan or Court Order.

Once the parents have agreed to appoint Judy or Temika as Parenting Coordinator and signed our Parenting Coordination Agreement, each parent will complete a separate intake session. You should allow approximately one hour for the intake session. These are followed by joint sessions as required. Our usual policy is that all sessions are conducted by Microsoft Teams.

We confirm Judy has availability for one-hour appointments most mornings at 8:00am or afternoon at 5:00pm onwards. Judy can also conduct sessions during business hours, subject to negotiation and availability. Temika has availability to conduct sessions during business hours.

What should I do to prepare for my intake or joint session?

Before your intake session, please provide us with a copy of your Court Order or Parenting Plan. You may also wish to write down the key parenting issues or concerns you'd like to discuss however this is not a requirement.

How often will I be required to attend joint Parenting Coordination sessions?

It depends. Every matter is unique. We can facilitate sessions as often or as little as required. Joint sessions typically occur once per month and are 60 minutes in length but may be required more or less frequently. The parents may organise extra sessions, jointly or individually, with the Parenting Coordinator.

Can I organise an individual session with the Parenting Coordinator at any time?

Yes. Individual sessions can occur at any time provided that the requesting parent meets the cost of the appointment in advance. Individual sessions are not confidential, and our Parenting Coordinators may forward a joint email following the session outlining the issues discussed. The parent who has not requested an individual session will be provided with the opportunity to also schedule an individual session.

Can joint Parenting Coordination sessions be conducted by shuttle if I do not wish to interact with the other parent?

Yes. We can conduct Parenting Coordination sessions by shuttle or with both parents in the same Microsoft Teams meeting room. You can discuss your preference with us during your individual intake session.

Where are Parenting Coordination sessions held? Can I attend Parenting Coordination with you if I live outside of Brisbane?

Yes. You can attend sessions with us if you are based outside of Brisbane. Our usual policy is that all sessions are conducted by Microsoft Teams.



What does Parenting Coordination cost?

The cost of Parenting Coordination with Judy Stewart is \$500 per hour plus GST.

The cost of Parenting Coordination with Temika Slee is \$400 per hour plus GST.

Upon our appointment, we require the parents to pay a retainer to cover the cost of each party's intake session. Ongoing costs of joint sessions are shared between the parents (unless otherwise agreed).

How long does the appointment of a Parenting Coordinator typically last? Can I terminate Parenting Coordination at any time?

Unless an Order states otherwise, or there is an alternative agreement, our role is typically for two years. Parenting Coordination can be terminated at any time by either parent. If we are appointed by Court Order, our appointment can only be terminated by further Order of the Court.

What issues can a Parenting Coordinator help us resolve?

Parenting Coordinators can assist parents to resolve disputes regarding:

- Parenting time, including but not limited to changes in the regular schedule (such as pick up and drop off times), organising makeup time, swapping time, the organisation of special occasions and holidays not provided for in the Order or Parenting Plan;
- Child/ren's activities or schooling;
- Child/ren's medical issues;
- Parental communication and conflict; and
- Any other child-related matter.

The parenting Coordinator's role is not to change an existing Parenting Order or Parenting Plan but rather to assist in implementing any Court Order or Parenting Plan with as little conflict between the parents as possible.

Parenting issues subject to ongoing litigation or negotiation cannot be negotiated at Parenting Coordination sessions.



Can Parenting Coordination address financial or property disputes?

No. Parenting Coordination is limited to parenting matters. We cannot assist with financial settlements, child support or property-related disputes. You may wish to seek legal advice or mediation for those issues.

What happens if a dispute arises during Parenting Coordination that cannot be resolved?

If efforts to negotiate a resolution of an issue are unsuccessful, then the Parenting Coordinator may provide the parents with non-binding suggestions regarding the resolution the Parenting Coordinator considers to be in the best interests of the children. The Parenting Coordinator's direction will relate to the implementation (not the amendment) of any existing Parenting Orders or Parenting Plan. Written reasons for the direction may be provided and will form part of the non-confidential record of the Parenting Coordination process.

The Parenting Coordinator may suggest involving a Family Dispute Resolution Practitioner (FDRP) or seeking legal advice. In some cases, Court intervention may be necessary, but often the goal is to avoid this by resolving matters more efficiently and cooperatively.

Can you invite the other parent to attend Parenting Coordination? What happens if the other parent doesn't agree to attend Parenting Coordination?

Yes. We can reach out to the other parent and enquire if they agree to our appointment as Parenting Coordinator; however, we are unable to progress Parenting Coordination further until the other parent confirms they agree to our appointment.

Given we must remain impartial in our role as Parenting Coordinator we cannot provide you with advice in relation to the next steps if one parent does not wish to proceed. You may wish to seek independent legal advice in relation to next steps.



What happens if one parent repeatedly cancels or does not attend sessions?

We cannot progress Parenting Coordination if one parent refuses to attend sessions. We must remain impartial and cannot provide you with legal advice. You may wish to speak with an independent legal representative regarding your options and the next steps.

Is it possible to suspend the Parenting Coordination process and resume it at a later date?

Yes. Parenting Coordination can be suspended at any time. If both parents wish to resume Parenting Coordination later, we can schedule new sessions, subject to availability. In some matters, an updated Parenting Coordination Agreement and/or individual intake session may be required.

Is Parenting Coordination confidential?

No. Parenting Coordination is not confidential. Our Parenting Coordinators may share information with the parents or with their legal representatives, if any.

Our file will be available to be used as evidence in any subsequent and related Court proceedings, if ordered by the Court. Parenting Coordinators may also disclose information to third parties if they have a reasonable suspicion that a child/ren may be subject to harm or there are threats made against the other parent.

Do Parenting Coordinators have decision-making authority?

No. If attempts to negotiate a resolution fail, the Parenting Coordinator may offer suggestions or options that they believe are in the best interests of your child/ren. These suggestions are not legally binding on the parents. The reasons for any recommendation may be produced to the Court in any future litigation between the parents.



Can Parenting Coordinators prepare a report for the parents?

It depends. Our Parenting Coordinators will not prepare a report at the request of the parties or their legal representatives. Our Parenting Coordinators will only prepare a report at the request of the Court, and the report will be provided directly to the Court (not to the parties or their legal representatives) or as otherwise directed by the Court.

Will the Parenting Coordinator give evidence in Court?

It depends. Our Parenting Coordinators will only give evidence if required by the Court. Records from Parenting Coordination may be provided to the Court if subpoenaed or required under a Court Order.

What records are kept of Parenting Coordination sessions?

Our Parenting Coordinators will provide both parents with a written summary following each joint session.

We also keep written notes of each session. These may include a summary of the topics discussed and any outcomes. These notes may be produced in Court in any subsequent litigation between the parents.



Can I record Parenting Coordination sessions?

No. For sessions conducted via phone or video conferencing, the Parenting Coordinator, the parents, and any other person attending the session must:

- Not electronically record any part of the meeting on any device;
- Not share the content of meeting invitations, online chats, or other documents or communications with anyone who is not part of the process;
- Immediately inform the Parenting Coordinator if anyone other than a party to the meeting can hear or see any part of the meeting, or access any content that is not part of the discussion; and
- Not share the video conference link and/or password with any person not part of the meeting.

Can a Parenting Coordinator speak to third parties?

Yes. If the Parenting Coordinator believes it would be helpful, the Parenting Coordinator may speak to the child and contact third parties, including but not limited to the child, teachers, medical care providers, carers, or lawyers, and may review any relevant documents that, in the Parenting Coordinator's opinion, would assist the parenting coordination process.

The parents will need to sign any necessary authorities for the release of requested information. The Parenting Coordinator will advise the parents before contacting anyone associated with either parent or their child/ren.



Want more information?

We understand that family law disputes are stressful.
We are here to support you.

If you have more questions, please contact our office on **(07) 3221 0100**
or email info@stewartfamilylaw.com.au.

Our friendly administrative staff are trained to answer your questions in
relation to our parenting coordination process.

