

IN THE FAMILY COURT OF ST. LOUIS COUNTY
STATE OF MISSOURI

FAMILY COURT ADMINISTRATIVE JUDGE ORDER NO. 160

ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER GOVERNING IMPLEMENTATION AND OPERATION OF
PARENTING COORDINATION PROGRAM

WHEREAS, the Family Court of St. Louis County was created by Sections 487.010 through 487.190 of the Revised Statutes of Missouri.

WHEREAS, the Honorable Thea A. Sherry has been appointed Administrative Judge of the Family Court of St. Louis County pursuant to Section 487.010.3 R.S.Mo.

WHEREAS, on July 25, 2008, the Honorable Michael Burton entered Administrative Order No. 115 "Governing Implementation and Operation of Parenting Coordination Program."

WHEREAS, pursuant to Supreme Court Rule 17, Supreme Court Rule 88 and Local Rule 38, the Court has adopted alternative dispute resolution which provides procedures for disposition before trial or without trials of certain civil cases with resultant savings of time and expense for the litigants and to the court without sacrificing the quality of justice. As used in Supreme Court Rule 17, Supreme Court Rule 88 and by local rule, the alternative dispute resolution programs include, but are not limited to, arbitration, early neutral evaluation, and mediation. Further, each circuit is encouraged to develop other alternative dispute resolution programs that meet the needs of the parties, the circuit and the community;

WHEREAS, it is the public policy of the State of Missouri to assure that each minor child has frequent and continuing contact with both parents after the parents separate or the marriage of the parties is dissolved and to encourage parents to share the rights, responsibilities and joys of childrearing;

WHEREAS, the Family Court through its committees has undertaken to implement ways to assist parents with chronic conflict by facilitating the resolution of disputes in a timely manner, educating parents about children's needs, and with the approval of the parties and the court, implementing a process for making decisions within the scope of the court order, without divesting the court of its jurisdiction to determine the fundamental issues of custody and visitation;

WHEREAS, parenting coordination is a process whereby an impartial third person, called a "parenting coordinator", helps the parties implement and maintain the terms of their existing parenting plan entered as judgment in their case by facilitating the resolution of disputes between parents;

WHEREAS, the use of parenting coordinators promotes the best interest of minor children and their parents by reducing the duration and severity of parental conflict, thereby protecting children from the harmful effects of such conduct;

WHEREAS, the Family Court finds that parenting coordination is an effective alternative dispute resolution program aimed at assisting those involved in dissolution of marriage, legal separation, paternity, custody and guardianship cases, and modification to such proceedings where a minor child is involved;

WHEREAS, the Family Court finds that appointment of a parent coordinator, with the agreement of the parties, is appropriate where the court finds the parties demonstrate their inability or unwillingness to make parenting decisions on their own, to comply with parenting agreements and orders, to reduce their child-related conflicts and to protect their children from the impact of that conflict, and/or finds other conditions that in the discretion of the court warrant appointment of a parenting coordinator;

NOW, THEREFORE, IT IS ORDERED that Policy and Procedure for Parenting Coordinators shall govern the implementation and operation of the parenting coordination programs within the jurisdiction of the Family Court of St. Louis County. Said program may be ordered by the Family Court with the agreement of the parties under the Policy and Procedures dated this day attached hereto and incorporated herein.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that the Family Court Administrator may implement through such department or departments of the Family Court as the Administrator deems most appropriate, policies and procedures consistent with Parenting Coordination Programs in conformity with the attached Policy and Procedures and such modifications as shall be made thereto;

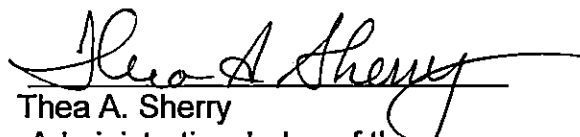
IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that the Administrative Judge of the Family Court expressly reserves the right to modify the aforementioned Policy and Procedure from time to time and in such manner as the Family Court Administrative Judge deems appropriate in the circumstances. A copy of the Policy and Procedures including the "Application for Inclusion on Court Approved List of Parenting Coordinators" is attached to this Administrative Order and is incorporated herein.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that a list of Parenting Coordinators who have certified that they meet qualifications set by the Family Court of St. Louis County for parenting coordination and have been approved by the Family Court Administrator for all relevant issues raised in dissolution of marriage, legal separation, paternity, custody and guardianships or modifications to such proceedings, shall be maintained within the Department of Human Resources. This list shall be updated periodically and made available to interested persons upon request.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that the parenting coordination provisions in Administrative Orders No. 158 are hereby withdrawn and are null and void *ab initio*.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that the Circuit Clerk provide notice of this amendment by causing this order to be published as soon as practicable in *The St. Louis Countian*, by posting a copy of this order in a conspicuous place in the Office of the Circuit Clerk, and by making copies of this order available for distribution from the Office of the Circuit Clerk.

SO ORDERED:


Thea A. Sherry
Administrative Judge of the
Family Court

Entered this 18th day of December 2017.