

Custody Evaluators' responsibilities include, but are not limited to:

- Protecting the confidentiality of the parties and children involved in the case with collateral contacts.
- Minimizing the amount of trauma that the child is exposed to.
- Identifying themselves and explaining their role and reporting requirements.
- Not pressuring children to state a custodial preference.
- Considering the health, safety, welfare, and best interest of the child throughout the entire process.
- Maintaining objectivity by gathering and providing balanced information from BOTH parties on the case.

How much does a custody evaluation cost?

Private custody evaluators charge and collect fees and require an up-front deposit. In some cases, the court may appoint a court-employed CE at no / discounted cost for families that meet financial eligibility requirements.

Dedicated to serving the families and children of Medina County



Contact Us

Phone: (330)725-9740

Web: Medinadr.org

NOTICE

This pamphlet was created to help you understand your options for dispute resolution. It is not created to advise you about the law.



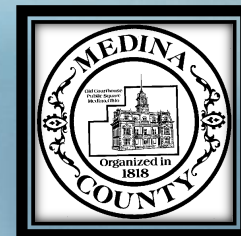
Judge Julie A. Schafer
Medina County
Domestic Relations Court
99 Public Square
Medina, OH 44256

Custody Evaluation



Medina County Domestic Relations Court

Family Court Resources



Medina County Domestic Relations Court is pleased to offer an evaluative and analytical dispute resolution tool – ***Custody Evaluation.***

What is a Custody Evaluation?

Custody Evaluation involves the appointment of a licensed mental health professional, who conducts forensic interviews and clinical observations, reviews and analyzes information and writes a report with recommendations to help the court make decisions in the best interest of children.

How can I get a Custody Evaluation?

The court may order that a custody evaluator be assigned to your case on its own, upon written motion from either party / attorney, or upon recommendation or request from the GAL.

What does the custody evaluation process include?

- Interviews with & observations of parents & children
- Reviewing health, education, criminal, & other relevant records
- Psychological testing & assessments
- Collateral contacts
- Evaluation summary report

What are the differences between a full evaluation and a partial / brief-focused evaluation?

A **full custody evaluation** is a comprehensive examination of the best interests of a child and the parents' ability to meet the child's needs as determined through clinical observation and investigation, including intensive interviewing of the family, a wide variety of collateral contacts, a thorough review of the family dynamics, and possible use of psychological testing and/or assessments.

A **partial custody evaluation** is an examination of the best interest of a child that is limited by court order in either time or scope and is typically used when a single issue or narrowly defined set of issues need to be investigated to inform specific aspects of the court's decision. It is less intrusive, not as expensive, takes less time, and might be requested as an update to a recently completed full evaluation. It is not ordered when custody or the allocation of decision-making is at issue.

What types of issues are appropriate for a custody evaluation?

- Substance abuse
- Domestic violence
- Mental health / suicidal ideation
- Child abuse / neglect
- Special needs of the children
- Parenting-time resistance
- Out-of-state relocation
- Fitness to parent
- High conflict between the parents
- School-district dispute
- Medical decision making

What are the qualifications of a Custody Evaluator?

1. A license to practice psychology, social work, or counseling; or
2. Physician licensed and board certified in psychiatry, or
3. A court-employed evaluator with at least a master's degree in a mental-health field that includes formal education and training in the legal, social, familial, and cultural issues involved in custody decisions

