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INFORMATION LEAFLET ON PSYCHO-LEGAL INVESTIGATIONS INTO PRIMARY RESIDENCY, CARE AND CONTACT

Thank you for choosing Rooted to assist you and your children through an investigation into primary residency, care, and contact. We would like to take this opportunity to provide you with more information on the investigation process and our foundational beliefs when it comes to an investigation into primary residency, care, and contact. This information forms part of our process of informed consent. Please carefully read through this document and raise any questions regarding the process with your social worker.

Introduction

At Rooted the investigation into primary residency, care and contact is driven by our commitment to ensuring your child's well-being, emotional growth, and stability. The investigation seeks to create a comprehensive and balanced picture of your child's needs, emotions, and relationships.

It aims to:

- Ensure your child's best interests are prioritised.
- Determine suitable primary residency, care, and contact arrangements.
- Consider your child's emotional well-being and developmental needs.

An investigation into primary residency, care, and contact is a comprehensive and systematic process that provides valuable insights that contribute to informed decision-making, child well-being, and the creation of supportive environments.In situations of parental conflict or disputes over primary residency and contact, the investigation provides an objective and unbiased assessment of the child's circumstances. This can help resolve conflicts and guide parents toward cooperative solutions that prioritise the child's well-being.

The Investigation Process

A comprehensive investigation onto primary residency, care and contact involves the following aspects:

Step 1: Initial contracting and obtaining a mandate for the investigation.

A. Receiving initial instruction from legal parties and obtaining a formal mandate for the investigation.
B. Obtaining informed consent from both parents.
C. Gathering preliminary information from legal documents and involved parties.
D. Establishing a timeline and plan for the investigation.

Step 2: Voice of the Child Assessment / Socio-Emotional Assessment of the child

A. Evaluating the child's emotional, physical, and psycho-social needs.

B. Analysing the child's experience of the relationships with each parent, attachment, and their overall adjustment.

C. Gathering their perspectives on living arrangements and relationships.

D. Assessing the child's wishes and preferences (if appropriate)

E. Identifying any signs of distress or potential risks.

(Please refer to the Information Leaflet on Socio-emotional Assessment for more detailed outline on what the socio-emotional assessment entails).

Step 3: Systemic Investigation and data collection

A. Interviews with parents/legal guardians

1. Individual interviews to assess parenting abilities, living conditions, and relationships
2. Joint interviews to understand communication and cooperation between parents

B. Home visits to observe living conditions and the environment (*where applicable*)

C. Review of relevant documents (e.g., school records, medical reports).

D. Collateral Interviews with relevant parties (*where applicable*)

Step 4: Assessment of Parental Capacity

A. Evaluating each parent's ability to provide a safe and nurturing environment.

B. Assessing parenting skills and patterns of attachment through Interactional Analysis

C. Identifying any history of abuse, neglect, or substance use.

D. Considering cultural, socioeconomic, and other contextual factors.

Step 5: Co-Parenting Dynamics

A. Examining the ability of parents to cooperate and communicate effectively.

B. Assessing the potential for conflict resolution and shared decision-making.

C. Identifying any history of domestic violence or restraining orders.

Step 6: Collating and Analyzing Data

A. Organizing and analyzing the collected information.

B. Identifying common themes, patterns, and discrepancies.

C. Evaluating the strengths and challenges of each parent's caregiving capabilities.

Step 7: Report and Recommendations

A. Summarising the findings of the investigation.

B. Providing an analysis of the child's best interests based on the assessment.

C. Recommending primary residency, care, and contact arrangements.

D. Suggesting potential support services or interventions to address identified concerns.

Limits Of Confidentiality In An Investigation Into Primary Residency Care And Contact

In an investigation into primary residency care and contact, confidentiality is a crucial ethical principle that governs the sharing and protection of sensitive information. While social workers aim to establish

a trusting and open relationship with all parties involved, including parents and children, there are certain limits to confidentiality that must be understood. These limits are in place to ensure the safety and well-being of all individuals, especially when legal, ethical, or safety concerns arise. Here are the limits of confidentiality in an investigation into primary residency care and contact:

- Social workers are bound by legal requirements to report certain situations that pose a risk to the safety or well-being of a child. If during the investigation, the social worker becomes aware of any credible and immediate threat to a child's safety, they are obligated to report this information to the appropriate child protective services or law enforcement agency. This may include instances of abuse, neglect, or other forms of harm.

- If a court order is in place as part of the divorce proceedings, the social worker may be required to share specific information with the court, legal representatives, or other relevant parties. The court's authority takes precedence over confidentiality in such cases.

- If the investigation is part of a legal proceeding, the social worker may need to communicate with the legal representatives of the parents. This could involve sharing relevant information related to the investigation, findings, and recommendations.

- The final report in an investigation into primary residency, care, and contact is a comprehensive document that outlines the findings, assessments, and recommendations resulting from the investigation process. This report plays a critical role in informing the legal system, parents, and other relevant parties about the social worker's evaluation of the situation and their insights into what arrangements would be in the best interests of the child. However, it's important to note that the final report may contain confidential information that needs to be handled and shared responsibly.

By understanding these limits, individuals can participate in the investigation process with a clear understanding of how information will be handled and shared.

Guidelines For Communication To Ensure Transparency, Neutrality, And A Fair Process

In the process of investigating primary residency, care, and contact arrangements, transparency and neutrality play pivotal roles in maintaining fairness and trust among all parties involved. As a fundamental aspect of these principles, it is important to ensure that all communication with the social worker is shared with and accessible to every relevant party, including parents, and legal representatives. This practice not only upholds the values of transparency and neutrality but also serves several vital purposes:

- By copying all parties in on communication, we ensure that everyone has access to the same information simultaneously. This prevents any party from feeling excluded or uninformed, creating a level playing field for all involved.

- Open communication with all parties reduces the likelihood of misunderstandings or misinterpretations of information. When everyone receives the same communication directly from the source, it minimizes the potential for distorted messages or incomplete information.

- When all communication is visible to all parties, it promotes accountability and reinforces the social worker's commitment to impartiality and ethical conduct. The shared communication underscores the neutrality of the process and strengthens the trustworthiness of the investigation.

Inclusion of all parties in communication reflects a commitment to a holistic, collaborative, and just investigation process. It signifies that the social worker recognises the importance of every stakeholder's input and perspectives. Ultimately, this practice serves as a cornerstone for maintaining a balanced, unbiased, and child-centered approach throughout the investigation into primary residency, care, and contact arrangements.

Thank you for taking the time to read this information leaflet about the care and contact investigation process. We understand that the well-being of your child is of utmost importance to you, and we want to assure you that our dedicated team is here to support you every step of the way.

If you ever have any questions, concerns, or need further information, please don't hesitate to reach out to our staff. We are here to provide you with the guidance and assistance you need during this process. We appreciate your trust in us, and we are committed to providing the highest level of care for your child.