

Problem-solving Parenting Time Disputes during the COVID-19 Crisis

*A Partnership between the
London Family Court Clinic & Children's Hospital LHSC,
Shared Decision Making (SDM) Decision Coach Services*

THE NEED

Many separated parents who are managing parenting time between two homes may be in conflict about the best ways to manage transitions and time with each parent or even time with extended family members if appropriate, particularly during the COVID 19 Crisis. Accessing the courts to resolve disputes is currently limited to the most urgent matters. The LFCC and LHSC professionals have put together a child psychology and medical team to help share decision making in these cases in order to resolve disputes related to the best plan based on current knowledge about COVID-19. This intervention will offer guidance and problem-solving strategies for parents in conflict. This service is not intended to replace formal mediation, or court-ordered parenting assessments.

CRITERIA FOR INITIAL REFERRAL

The referral criteria include:

1. Existing parenting time agreement or court order
2. No conflicts over parenting capacity or child safety related to abuse, addiction issues or mental health disorder.
3. Both parents are in agreement on the referral
4. The dispute is centered on health and safety planning around parenting time and activities in light of COVID-19.

MAKING A REFERRAL

The London Family Court Clinic will be responsible for initial screening of cases to make sure that they are appropriate for this service rather than other formal clinical or court interventions.

The Children's Hospital, LHSC will be providing a decision coach and will operate out of Children's Hospital, LHSC and will be available to provide coaching consultations.

(More information here: www.lhsc.on.ca/shared-decision-making)

To get started, call the London Court Clinic at: 519-870-5922 and ask for clinical services, or email services@lfcc.on.ca. LHSC requires a family physician or pediatrician referral to be made to the Lead Physician and Decision Coach to conduct the consult.

This special program is supported by the Government of Canada's Emergency Community Support Fund and Community Foundations of Canada.