

Second Quarter 2005

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## QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

### Parent Coordinator Legislation Passed

#### SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

- 2005 Annual Conference set for September 30 and October 1, 2005 in Houston at the Hotel Derek
- The Court Related Services Directory, services which are provided by Texas AFCC members, will be on line by September 1, 2005. See web site for instructions on how to be included in the directory or contact :Lynelle Yingling .
- Send newsletter items to [dchiggs@sbcglobal.net](mailto:dchiggs@sbcglobal.net)

#### The President's Corner By Judge Leta Parks

On June 17th, Governor Rick Perry signed House Bill 252 and Texas became the fifth state to have a specific statute authorizing the appointment of parent coordinators as part of a comprehensive parenting plan for divorcing or divorced parents. Several Texas Chapter members were instrumental in helping to draft and promote the legislation including Judge Debra Lehrmann, Dr. Lynelle Yingling and Judge Leta Parks. Special thanks go to Harry Tindall for the actual drafting and to Representative Toby

Goodman for sponsoring the bill. The legislation becomes effective September 1, 2005.

There will be a three hour parent coordinator workshop at the Texas AFCC annual conference which is scheduled for September 30-October 1, 2005 in Houston, TX. Harry Tindall will give a talk on the bill's legislative history.

#### DON'T MISS IT!

#### Register Now For The Texas AFCC Annual Conference

The Texas AFCC Annual Conference will be held at the sophisticated and beautiful Hotel Derek in the Galleria Area of Houston. *Co-Parenting Solutions: Tools for Diffusing Conflict* features nationally known co-parenting experts Elizabeth Thayer, Ph.D. and Jeffrey Zimmerman, Ph.D. who are co-authors of *The Co-Parenting Survival Guide*, *Adult Children of Divorce*, and other works. The outstanding program also features a number of other recognized experts in high conflict parenting and parental alienation.

### Board of Directors Moving Forward With Initiatives Scheduled for 2005

The Board of Directors met June 17, 2005 in Round Rock. Agenda items were:

- Updates were provided on the conference, financial report, and legislative issues.
- The education committee discussed possibilities around providing on going CEU.
- The membership committee continues to move forward with individual board members going out to groups and meetings.
- The regional groups committee is still looking for active participants out in the El Paso area. (Cont. 2)

## JUST WHAT THE HECK IS A PARENT COORDINATOR?

By Lynelle Yingling

Parent coordination (known by various names across different jurisdictions), has actually been practiced in Texas for many years. Recent legislation has codified and standardized those practices, and the resulting clarity seems likely to expand the practice throughout the state.

The parent coordinator supports the parents to make final decisions about co-parenting issues while protecting the authority of the court to make any binding legal changes in the parenting

plan. The parent coordinator is free to use a variety of interventions, therapy, education, mediation, etc., to facilitate parental decision-making and implementation of the parenting plan. One of the greatest components is that the therapeutic support role and the forensic litigation role is not mixed because the parent coordinator does not testify in court.

The role of the parent coordinator is defined as a conciliation form of intervention based on self determination by the divorcing or divorced

parents vs. a litigation process based on court evidence determination. The parent coordinator reports only compliance with the court order and if the process should continue which generally aids the parents to stay focused on their responsibility to make decisions around the parenting plan in an effective manner.

The qualifications for a parent coordinator are broadly defined but the required minimal study area is that of mental health which keeps the practice in this field.

"Never attribute to malice that which can be adequately explained by stupidity."  
Hanlon's Razor

### Texas Chapter to Offer Listing Service

Starting in September, The Texas Chapter of AFCC will begin providing a new listing/referral service on the Chapter Homepage, [www.TexasAFCC.org](http://www.TexasAFCC.org). This is an expansion of our ongoing attempts (through our Service Models Task Force) to catalogue the various types

of services available throughout Texas to help resolve family conflict. Check under the "Resources-Professional Services" for information regarding how to have your services listed. Information needs to be received by August 1 to be included in the first round of listings. Don't

miss this great opportunity to let the legal and therapeutic communities, as well as client families, know about how you can help.

### Board Meeting (Cont.)

- Lynelle Yingling will put together the available services model directory of court-related services. She may be contacted at [Lynelle@SystemsMediation.com](mailto:Lynelle@SystemsMediation.com).
- The Board welcomes input on the many projects over the last several years which have been undertaken. Please let a Board member know if there is a topic for the 2006 Conference you would like to hear about, an interdisciplinary issue to discuss, or an issue that needs to be addressed on a statewide level. Any input is welcome.

