

# CUSTODY EVALUATION

## Introduction

When parents are not able to resolve disputes about child custody after divorce, the court may call for a psychologist's report on custody arrangement from the Social Welfare Department.

## Purpose of Custody Evaluation

The guiding principle of Custody Evaluation is to safeguard the best interests of the child. The clinical psychologist will provide expert opinions to the Court on issues relating to custody, access, and/or childcare arrangements.

Custody Evaluation is not to determine which parent wins or loses, nor to decide who is to be blamed for the divorce. In general, the following areas will be examined in detail:

- The developmental needs of the child(ren);
- The childcare abilities of both parents;
- The relationships among family members.



## Process

A comprehensive, objective, multi-source and multi-modal approach is used in the custody evaluation process, which may require several interviews with each parent and child. The process consists of the following:

## Interview:

- To interview each parent and each child individually;
- To interview relative(s), e.g. step-parents, grandparents;
- If necessary, the parents and child(ren) are interviewed conjointly.

## Observation:

Observing the interaction of each parent with the child(ren).

## Collateral Information:

The responsible clinical psychologist will review previous records on all parties (parents and child), e.g. psychological or medical reports. If necessary, the clinical psychologist will also gather information from:

- The parent's previous and/or present doctor, psychologist, counselor, social worker etc.
- The child(ren)'s previous and/or present doctor, psychologist, counselor, social worker etc.
- The school of the child(ren).

## Psychological Testing:

The clinical psychologist will administer psychological tests to each parent and/or each child on a need basis.

## Assessment Report

The clinical psychologist will compile a report based on the information collected from the assessment and submit it to the court.

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2015

