

New Ways for Families™

PARENT INSTRUCTIONS

DEAR PARENT:

You are going to be using *New Ways for Families*™, a new method for handling separation and divorce issues. *New Ways* is designed to provide you and your children with skills for resilience during this time of significant change in your family, *before* making big decisions. It does not require you to have contact with the other parent at any time, however that is an option. *New Ways* has 4 basic steps:

- Step 1: Getting Started**, which includes signing a stipulation to participate in *New Ways* and/or getting a court order to participate in *New Ways*, including the appointment of a Parent-Child Counselor. Then, you need to select an Individual Parent Counselor to get started right away. Then, you need to prepare and serve a Behavioral Declaration and a Reply Behavioral Declaration.
- Step 2: Individual Counseling**, which includes 6 sessions with your own confidential counselor. This counseling includes a Parent Workbook, which you will write in during your sessions and possibly before and after your sessions.
- Step 3: Parent-Child Counseling**, which includes 3 sessions each with you and your child/ren (alternating weeks with the other parent over 6 weeks). You and the other parent share the same non-confidential counselor. You will each have your own Parent-Child Workbook for these sessions. This counselor does not write a report or make recommendations, but can report observations to the court, if necessary.
- Step 4: Family (or Court) Decision-making**, which includes settlement negotiations for a new parenting plan with the assistance of professionals if possible, such as attorneys or a mediator. If you are unable to settle the case, then the court will make decisions for you at your next hearing.

The following instructions will help you get started:

1. Immediately select your own Individual Counselor: If you do not already have an individual counselor, you should select one within the next week who has been trained in the *New Ways for Families*™ method. For a list of counselors in your area, visit www.NewWays4Families.com or call 619-221-9108. You should contact your counselor and schedule your 6 sessions as soon as possible, as the other parent should be doing the same counseling at the same time with his or her individual counselor.
2. Immediately obtain your Parent Workbook: The Parent Workbook is \$20 and available from your therapist or by contacting www.NewWays4Families.com or 619-221-9108. You will need the Parent Workbook before your first Individual Parent Counseling session.
3. Immediately prepare your Behavioral Declaration and Reply Declaration: See the instructions at www.NewWays4Families.com. Your Behavioral Declaration should be provided to your Individual Parent Counselor and the other parent at least 2 business days before your first counseling appointment. Your Reply Behavioral Declaration should be provided to your Individual Counselor and the other parent 5 business days after receiving the other parent's Behavioral Declaration.
4. After your first Individual Counseling session, send Coordination Letter to your Parent-Child Counselor: Your court order should name your Parent-Child Counselor under paragraph 6. Send the Coordination Letter after your first Individual Counseling session (your Individual Counselor should have a blank Coordination Letter). Schedule your first parent-child meeting after your fifth or sixth Individual Counseling session. Then send your Behavioral Declaration, Reply Declaration and related court orders before your first session.

BEST WISHES!

Rev. 6-2012

BEHAVIORAL DECLARATIONS

Behavioral Declarations provide your New Ways Counselors with brief information about the three most serious concerns each parent has about the other's parenting skills. Reply Behavioral Declarations indicate whether each parent agrees or not with the concerns of the other. These help the counselors help the parents, by knowing the issues from each parent's point of view, and how much agreement or disagreement there is.

These are the only declarations which may be seen by the New Ways Counselors in your case. In preparing these two declarations, you are encouraged to seek the assistance of a lawyer trained in *New Ways for Families*[™], to help you provide the most useful information and possibly to help settle your case. A list of lawyers trained in New Ways is available at www.NewWays4Families.com or 619-221-9108 or ask your lawyer.

The following instructions will help you prepare these declarations:

- A) **What to write in your Behavioral Declaration:** See the first attached blank form for headings about what to write. You can use this form. It should be no longer than 2 pages. Your Behavioral Declaration should describe specific *behaviors* that are a concern for you about the other parent, strengths of the other parent, and what you are requesting regarding parenting plans.
- B) **Provide to Individual Counselor 2 business days before your counseling begins:** Behavioral Declarations and any related parenting court orders should be provided to your Individual Parent Counselor at least 2 business days before your first counseling session. A copy of your Behavioral Declaration should also be provided at least 2 business days before your first session to the other parent (to give to his or her Individual Parent Counselor).
- C) **What to write in your REPLY Behavioral Declaration:** See the second attached blank form for headings about what to write. This should be only 2 pages. Explain whether you Agree or Disagree (and why not) with what the other parent's concerns are about your parenting behavior, and any changes in your requests regarding parenting plans.
- D) **Provide 5 business days after receiving other parent's Behavioral Declaration:** REPLY Behavioral Declarations should be provided to your Individual Parent Counselor no more than 5 business days after you receive the other parent's Behavioral Declaration. A copy of your REPLY Behavioral Declaration should also be provided on the same day to the other parent (to give to his or her Individual Parent Counselor).
- E) **Provide to Parent-Child Counselor 10 calendar days before Parent-Child Counseling begins:** Provide your Behavioral Declaration, your Reply Behavioral Declaration and any related parenting court orders to the Parent-Child Counselor at least 10 calendar days before your first Parent-Child Counseling session.
- F) **Do Not File With Court:** The purpose of these declarations is to inform the counselors of your concerns, strengths, agreements or disagreements, and requests. They should not be filed with the court, so that you can focus on changing behavior rather than defending your past behavior. If you go to court, consult with an attorney about filing different declarations/affidavits with the court.

SUPERIOR COURT OF THE STATE OF _____
FOR THE COUNTY OF _____

In re the Matter of:

and

Case No. _____

BEHAVIORAL DECLARATION OF

Date of Marriage/Living Together _____ Date of Separation _____
Children's names and dates of birth: _____

I. MOTHER'S/FATHER'S 3 STRONGEST CONCERNS ABOUT OTHER'S PARENTING

1.

2.

3.

II. MOTHER'S/FATHER'S VIEW OF OTHER'S 3 BEST STRENGTHS

1.

2.

3.

III. MOTHER'S/FATHER'S PARENTING REQUESTS

Date _____

Print Name Here and Sign Above:

There should be no attachments to this Behavioral Declaration. Provide this to your Individual Counselor and the other parent before counseling begins. This should not be filed with the court.