

Kane County Local Rule

III. FAMILY

ARTICLE 14: FAMILY

14.00 GENERAL

For purposes of these Rules, a Family Division case is defined as any proceeding arising under the provisions of [Illinois Marriage and Dissolution of Marriage Act](#) (IMDMA), [Illinois Parentage Act](#) (IPA), or applicable proceedings for Orders of Protection (OP).

14.01 ASSIGNMENT OF CASES

- (a) All newly filed Dissolution with Children (DC), Dissolution No Children (DN), and Family (FA) designated cases shall be randomly assigned by the circuit clerk to a Family Division judge pursuant to the General Order of Assignments of Judges then in effect. When more than one (1) party files a Family Division case involving the same parties and issues, all such cases shall be consolidated into the earliest filed case to be heard by the judge assigned to that case.
- (b) Cases that are reinstated after having been dismissed or non-suited shall be assigned to the judge hearing the case at the time of dismissal. Cases that are re-filed following a dismissal or non-suit, which involve the same parties and subject matter regardless of party designation, shall likewise be assigned to the judge hearing the case at the time of dismissal.
- (c) Whenever possible and appropriate, all proceedings involving the parenting, allocation of parental responsibilities, adoption, guardianship or custody of an individual child shall be conducted by a single judge.
 - (1) When cases involving the same minor child or children are pending in both the Family Division and the Probate Division, the judges assigned to each case shall consult with each other to determine if the probate case(s) should be transferred to the Family Division to resolve any issues related to the child(ren).
 - (2) Private adoptions involving children that are the subject of any pending proceedings in the family division shall be assigned to and heard by the Judge presiding in the Family matter.
 - (3) In any case pending in the Family Division involving a minor child or children who is the subject of a Juvenile Court Act petition, the family court judge shall stay all or part of the proceedings pending the outcome of the Juvenile Court proceedings.
- (d) From time to time, the Chief Judge or the Presiding Judge of the Family Division may reassign cases to promote equity and manage caseloads within the division.

14.02 SETTING OF CASES ON COURT CALLS

Unless otherwise set forth in these rules, all pre-decree motions shall be heard by the

Kane County Local Rule

judge assigned to the case. All post-decree actions shall be assigned pursuant to a list created by the presiding judge of the Family Division, and updated periodically. See addendum Post-Decree Judicial Assignments. The list shall be distributed to the Kane County Circuit Clerk, the Kane County Bar Association and made publicly available.

14.03 PLEADINGS, MOTIONS AND COURTESY COPIES

- (a) All pleadings shall be filed in a form consistent with the relevant statutory authority, [Local Court Rules](#) and [Supreme Court Rules](#).
- (b) Courtesy copies shall be provided to the Court as directed.
- (c) Unless otherwise required by law, rule, or upon leave of Court, **EXHIBITS, PRIOR ORDERS OR PLEADINGS SHALL NOT be attached or filed with the circuit court clerk.** Violations of this rule may result in appropriate sanctions, including reasonable costs or fees associated with the enforcement of this rule, and in appropriate cases the barring of the particular exhibit.

14.04 EMERGENCY MATTERS

- (a) Designation of a matter as an "emergency" is determined to be an extraordinary measure and shall be heard at the discretion of the Court.
- (b) Emergency motions will be heard by the judge assigned to the case. The party and/or the attorney bringing the emergency motion must physically appear in person in open court. Zoom appearances will not be permitted barring extraordinary circumstances and with the express leave of the court. If the assigned judge is unavailable, then the emergency motion shall be heard by the presiding judge of the Family Division or his or her designee.
- (c) The initial burden of proving the alleged "emergency" shall be on the party filing the motion, and shall include, at a minimum, the following:
 - (1) Inability to obtain an assignment on the regularly scheduled call within a reasonable time given the circumstances for which relief is sought;
 - (2) Proper notice to the opposing party; and
 - (3) That immediate and irreparable injury, loss or damage will result if the relief is not granted and that there exists no adequate remedy at law.
- (d) If the Court makes a determination that a matter does not meet the criteria for an "emergency" matter, an order so finding shall be entered. A party or their attorney who responds to a motion alleged, but found not to be, an "emergency" may be entitled to an order striking the pleading, time to respond, and reimbursement of costs and fees.

14.05 NON-EMERGENCY MATTERS

All non-emergency motions shall be motioned up for "presentment" only. No issue may be motioned up "instanter" unless it is an emergency. Ordinarily, litigants will be given time to respond to any new issue presented, and such issue will be set for hearing

Kane County Local Rule

on a future date. If both sides are ready, issues may be heard by a judge on the first presentment date only at the judge's discretion.

14.06 ORDERS OF PROTECTION

- (a) Persons seeking an Order of Protection (OP) shall first sign in with the Family Division Administrative Assistant for information regarding their application and the judge assigned to hear their case that day.
- (b) Petitions associated with pending Criminal or Family Division cases, when practicable, should be heard by the judge assigned to hear the underlying case.
- (c) Whenever an OP is filed in a criminal case and there is a pending Family Division case involving the same parties and minor children, the following procedure should apply:
 - (1) The judge hearing the criminal case should hear the Petition for Plenary Order of Protection, and unless otherwise agreed, reserve all issues related to the children, including but not limited to support and the allocation of parental responsibilities.
 - (2) The judge hearing the criminal case may then transfer the criminal case to the appropriate Family Division judge for the limited purpose of resolving any or all of the reserved issues relating to the parenting, care and support of the children.
- (d) Whenever an independent petition for OP is filed involving the same parties and children in a pending Family Division case, the OP case should be consolidated into the Family Division case, or assigned to the same judge assigned to the family division case.

14.07 INDIRECT CIVIL CONTEMPT

- (a) This sub-section shall not apply to actions to enforce allocated parenting time.
- (b) No Rule to Show Cause (Rule) shall issue except upon proper notice and motion by verified pleading. Rules to Show Cause may issue with no evidentiary hearing. Accordingly, the burden of proof shall not shift to the respondent upon the issuance of the Rule.
- (c) Unless otherwise agreed to by the parties and approved by the court, all Rules shall be returnable not less than fourteen (14) days and no more than thirty (30) days from the date of issuance.
- (d) Service shall be in accordance with Supreme Court Rules as in service summons.

14.08 ENFORCEMENT OF ALLOCATED PARENTING TIME

- (a) Actions to enforce allocated parenting time shall be initiated by verified pleading which shall set forth the name and case number of the FA or DC case under which the cause of action arose, the specific remedies being sought, and the sub-section

Kane County Local Rule

- in which the remedy is authorized. All enforcement actions shall be given priority, and shall be heard, when possible, within thirty (30) days of the initial return date. These pleadings shall be entitled “Petition to Enforce Allocated Parenting Time.”
- (b) If the potential remedies sought do not include a finding of contempt under [750 ILCS 5/607.5\(c\)\(6\)](#), or the subsequent remedies in [750 ILCS 607.5\(f\)](#), the pleading shall be filed and noticed as any other motion as part of the underlying case.
- (c) If the potential remedies sought do include a finding of contempt under [750 ILCS 65/607.5\(c\)\(6\)](#), or the subsequent remedies in [750 ILCS 607.5\(f\)](#), the pleading shall be filed with the clerk as a new Criminal Contempt (CC) case. The moving party should be named as the Petitioner in the case caption, and the alleged non-complying parent named as Defendant.
- (1) Service upon the Defendant may be by Notice to Appear or Summons with an initial return date no less than fourteen (14) days and no more than thirty (30) days from the date of filing. The CC case shall be returnable before the judge assigned to hear the underlying FA or DC case from which the cause of action arose.
- (2) A Uniform Dispositional Order will be used by the court when resolving any such action to enforce allocated parenting time.

14.09 DEFAULT

- (a) Following the entry of default, appropriate written notice of intent to appear for prove-up shall be sent to the respondent; and, proof of such service shall be filed at or prior to the prove-up.
- (b) Whenever it appears that there has been some communication and/or agreement between the parties concerning any material issue, the court may require both parties to appear in open court at the time of the prove-up to acknowledge their agreement.

14.10 PROVE-UP HEARINGS

- (a) Prove-ups of facts for entry of final Judgment of Dissolution may occur in person or by submission of documents electronically, as outlined below.
- (b) Prove-up dates for in-person or Zoom prove-ups must be obtained from the court. Unless otherwise ordered by the court, prove-up hearings shall be scheduled before the judge assigned to the case.
- (c) The court may require a court reporter to take a verbatim record of a prove-up hearing, in which case the court reporter fees shall be paid in full at the time of hearing. The payment of said fees is the responsibility of the party seeking dissolution. Failure to make prompt payment may delay the entry of judgment or result in sanctions against said party.

Kane County Local Rule

- (d) Unless waived by the court, within thirty (30) days of the date of prove-up, a transcript of the proceeding shall be prepared and filed with the circuit clerk by the assigned court reporter.
- (e) Parties may e-file fully executed proposed settlement documents with the Kane County Circuit Clerk for the assigned judge's review and discretionary entry without a court appearance. (The Allocation Judgment/Parenting Plan may be filed at any time if signed by both parties).

Settlement documents shall include:

- (1) the Judgment
- (2) Marital Settlement Agreement, which should include whether child support and/or maintenance amounts are calculated pursuant to statute, and the numbers used in such calculation, and/or specify any basis for deviation, waiver, or reservation of the same. Disproportionate distribution of marital property (assets and liabilities), if any, should also be explained.
- (3) Allocation Judgment and Parenting Plan (if applicable)
- (4) copy of the Certificate of Dissolution (half/sheet) and
- (5) signed affidavits from each party (see below)

Signed affidavits shall include that each party:

- (1) agrees that the court has personal and subject matter jurisdiction;
- (2) stipulates to grounds;
- (3) has reviewed the documents in their entirety, understands their terms, and intends to be bound by them;
- (4) has entered into the agreements freely and voluntarily;
- (5) believes that the Marital Settlement Agreement is a fair and equitable division of the marital estate;
- (6) waives their appearance at a prove-up and a transcript thereof; and
- (7) wishes that the Court approve their agreement(s), incorporate it/them into the Judgment and enter the Final Judgment of Dissolution.
- (8) If either side is a self-represented litigant, the affidavit shall also state such party's acknowledgment that they are not represented by a lawyer. A [735 ILCS 5/1-109](#) verification may be added to the proposed documents.

14.11 FINANCIAL AFFIDAVIT / DISCOVERY RULES

- (a) The [Financial Affidavit \(Family & Divorce Cases\)](#) referenced in [section 501](#) of the IMDMA shall be utilized as set forth below in all Dissolution of Marriage or Civil Union and Legal Separation proceedings unless compliance is excused by order of court. The court may further require the [Financial Affidavit \(Family & Divorce Cases\)](#) in actions to establish or declare parentage and in post-decree proceedings. These rules do not apply to [Joint Simplified Dissolution](#).

Kane County Local Rule

- (b) Within thirty (30) days of the filing of the defendant's general appearance or responsive pleading, the parties shall exchange the completed [Financial Affidavit \(Family & Divorce Cases\)](#) in accordance with and subject to the provisions of [section 501](#) of the IMDMA. **The Financial Affidavit itself shall not be filed with the Circuit Clerk.**
- (c) In pre-decree cases, no party shall be entitled to serve any request for discovery on another party until the requesting party has served the opposing party, or their attorney, with a fully completed copy of the [Financial Affidavit \(Family & Divorce Cases\)](#) with all corroborating documents attached.
- (d) Absent a court order for good cause or agreement by the parties to the contrary, all discovery shall be concluded thirty (30) days prior to trial.

14.12 AFFIDAVITS OF INCOME AND EXPENSES FORM

The [Affidavit of Income and Expenses](#) form may be used in any pre or post-decree case involving financial issues, where the statutory [Financial Affidavit \(Family & Divorce Cases\)](#) referenced in section 501 of the IMDMA is not required by statute or by local court rule. **The affidavit should not be filed with the circuit clerk unless directed by the court.**

14.13 SETTLEMENT CONFERENCES

- (a) No case shall be set for trial until a minimum of one (1) settlement conference has been conducted with the court.
- (b) The parties shall exchange, BUT NOT FILE, at least three (3) days before the conference a pretrial memorandum setting forth:
 - (1) The ages of the parties and duration of the marriage;
 - (2) The ages of the parties' children and any agreements relating to the [Parenting Plan](#);
 - (3) The income, assets and liabilities of the parties; and
 - (4) Any other agreed or contested issues.
- (c) If either party or his attorney fails to appear at a settlement conference, the court may impose reasonable sanctions.

14.14 SETTING OF TRIAL STATUS DATE AND TRIAL

- (a) All cases, including post-decree cases, may be set for a trial status conference before trial. Any Order setting the matter for trial may include schedules for any further discovery and compliance with [Supreme Court Rule 213](#). The local family court [trial order](#) shall be used unless excused by the court.
- (b) All trials relating to the allocation of parental responsibilities should be held on consecutive days if possible. The court may order the parties to provide a court reporter for trial.

Kane County Local Rule

- (c) The court may order the parties to appear on the trial status date and present copies of the following to the court:
- (1) A list of witnesses they expect to call during their case in chief;
 - (2) Any stipulations expected to be used at trial;
 - (3) A trial memorandum, which shall list all contested issues, the income of each party, all assets and the value ascribed to each asset by the party, all liabilities of the parties and the balance on the indebtedness, and whether the asset(s)/liabilities are marital or non-marital, if applicable;
 - (4) All pretrial motions, including motions in limine; and
 - (5) A numerical list of exhibits that party intends to offer during his/her case in chief, along with copies if not previously tendered.
- (d) If a prove-up or a trial date has been set and the petitioner or his/her attorney fails to appear, the cause may be dismissed for want of prosecution.

14.15 ATTORNEY'S FEES

- (a) Petitions for contribution of fees sought by one party against the other shall be filed, whenever possible, prior to trial.
- (b) In any action for attorney fees, the supporting invoice of legal services rendered shall not be filed, but shall be presented to the court at the hearing.

14.16 FAMILY MEDIATION PROGRAM

- (a) Definitions:
- (1) "Mediation" is a cooperative process for resolving conflict with the assistance of a trained, neutral third party, whose role is to facilitate communication, to assist the parties in identifying issues needing to be resolved, to explore options, to negotiate acceptable solutions, and to assist in reaching agreement on the issues. Fundamental to the mediation process described herein are principles of cooperation, informality, privacy, confidentiality, self-determination, and full disclosure by the parties of relevant information. Mediation under this rule is a means for parties to maintain control of parenting decisions, by resolving for themselves the issues of custody, visitation, removal, and other non-financial children's issues. Parties are encouraged to participate in the mediation process by attempting good faith negotiation and resolution of the issues brought to mediation. Mediation under this rule is not to be considered a substitute for independent legal advice. Instead, it is designed to work in partnership with the attorneys and the legal process, by giving the parties the ability to be fully informed of options for resolution of their issues, which would include obtaining legal advice before, during, and after the mediation process.
 - (2) "Impediment to Mediation" means any condition including, but not limited to, domestic violence or intimidation, substance abuse, child abuse, mental illness

Kane County Local Rule

or a cognitive impairment, which hinders the ability of a party to negotiate safely, competently, and in good faith. Pursuant to these rules, the identification of impediments in a case is necessary to determine if mediation should be required, and to insure that only parties having a present, undiminished ability to negotiate are required to participate in mediation.

- (b) Subject Matter of Mediation. Court required mediation will be limited to disputes involving allocation of parental responsibilities; child custody, visitation, relocation, or other non-economic issues relating to the child(ren), either prior to dissolution of a marriage or post-judgment. Mediation may be ordered by the court for resolving family law issues other than child custody, visitation, removal, or non-economic issues relating to the child(ren) only if the parties and their attorneys agree. For mediation of these other issues, the court shall take into account the qualifications and professional background of the individual mediator appointed.
- (c) Prerequisite to Mediation. The parties referred to mediation by the court shall complete the [KIDS 1st Parent Education Program](#) prior to starting mediation or as soon after starting mediation as the parent education program's schedule allows. The mediator shall screen for the identification of cases that may be deemed as inappropriate for mediation under this rule.
- (d) Qualifications and Requirements of Dissolution Mediators;
 - (1) Any person who meets the following criteria is eligible to serve as a mediator for the purposes of this rule:
 - (A) The applicant has satisfactorily completed a forty (40) hour divorce mediation training program, approved by the court. In addition, the applicant must have completed training specific to domestic violence, child abuse, substance abuse, and mental illness, which gives the applicant an understanding of the issues related to these impairments and one's ability to negotiate effectively when impacted by one or more of these impairments.
 - (B) The applicant has been awarded a degree in law or a graduate degree in a field that includes the study of psychiatry, psychology, social work, human development, family counseling, or other behavioral science substantially related to marriage and family interpersonal relationships, or a related field otherwise approved by a Presiding Judge of the Family Division, or his/her designee.
 - (C) The applicant must be a member in good standing in professional organizations of his/her respective disciplines.
 - (D) The applicant must show proof of professional liability insurance which covers the mediation process.

Kane County Local Rule

- (E) The applicant has a minimum of two (2) years of work experience in his/her discipline of profession, or otherwise supervised by a qualified mediator.
- (F) The applicant maintains an office in Kane County where the court is located, unless otherwise allowed by the Presiding Judge of the Family Division, or his/her designee.

- (2) All persons meeting the requirements above who are interested in acting as a Court Appointed Mediator shall provide proof, by way of affidavit which is supported by documentation, of the aforesaid requirements to the Presiding Judge of the Family Division or the person designated to receive such material. Additionally, each applicant shall specify the hourly rate they will charge for mediation services. [[Application for Appointment as Mediator](#)]
- (3) A periodic [list of approved mediators](#) shall be prepared by the Presiding Judge of the Family Division or the person designated to keep such list.
- (4) A mediator shall participate in six (6) hours of continuing education every two (2) years from programs approved by the Court, relating to family law and/or mediation, and be personally responsible for ongoing professional growth.
- (5) The court mediators may be required from time to time to attend specific training offered or sponsored by the Family Mediation Program, the Bar Associations or other individuals or organizations.
- (6) A mediator shall mediate two (2) low-income cases, as identified by the court, per year at a reduced fee or *pro bono* if required by the court.

(e) Referral Procedures

- (1) Upon the Court's order or the parties' agreement to participate in mediation, the case shall be assigned a mediator. The mediator may be chosen by agreement of the parties. In the absence of any agreement, the Court shall assign a mediator from a [list of approved mediators](#). A Mediation Order shall be issued and signed by the Court. A mediation status date will be set for no later than sixty (60) days from the date the mediation order was issued.
- (2) Parties are not obligated to participate in the mediation process until ordered by the Court, or agreed to by the parties. The attorneys shall encourage their clients to mediate in good faith, and the parties shall participate in mediation in good faith. After entry of a mediation order by the Court, the absence of a party at a mediation session or the lack of a party's participation in the mediation process may result in sanctions, including reasonable costs to the other party for mediation and attorney's fees.
- (3) If the mediator appointed has any conflict of interest, another mediator shall be appointed by the court from the [list](#). If the mediator appointed on a designated low income case has already met his/her annual requirement for mediating low-income cases or *pro bono* cases and cannot or does not wish to take another, and informs the court, the court shall appoint another mediator that has not reached the required quota or is willing to take such cases in excess of two (2)

Kane County Local Rule

cases per year. Mediators should notify the office of the Presiding Judge of the Family Division of their *pro bono* appointment so that a record may be maintained to ensure fair distribution of these cases to all mediators.

- (4) By the status date, the mediator shall submit a report to the court and the parties' legal counsel, in the form of a Mediator Report, notifying the court and legal counsel of information listed in this rule under section (i).

(f) Conflict of Interest

- (1) Generally, in order to avoid the appearance of impropriety, a mediator who has represented or has had a professional relationship with either party prior to the mediation may not mediate the dispute unless the prior relationship is fully disclosed to both parties and each party consents in writing to the participation of the mediator notwithstanding the prior relationship. A mediator who is a mental health professional shall not provide counseling or therapy to the parties during the mediation process. An attorney-mediator may not represent either party in any matter during the mediation process or in a dispute between the parties after the mediation process.
- (2) Imputed Disqualifications. No mediator associated with a law firm or a counseling agency shall mediate a dispute when the mediator knows or reasonably should know that another attorney or counselor associated with that firm or agency would be prohibited from undertaking the mediation.
- (3) Exception. A therapist-mediator, who would otherwise be disqualified from mediation as a result of imputed disqualification, may undertake the mediation only under the following circumstances:
 - (A) There has been full disclosure to both parties about the conflict of interest and the imputed disqualification of the mediator, including the extent to which information is shared by personnel within the agency; and
 - (B) Both parties consent to the mediator in writing.
- (4) Exclusionary Rule. The mediator shall be barred from testimony as to confidential mediation records and shall not be subpoenaed in any proceeding except by leave of the Court for good cause shown.
- (5) Orientation Schedule. At the orientation session, a mediator shall inform the parties of the following:
 - (A) Neither therapy nor marriage counseling are part of the mediator's function;
 - (B) No legal advice will be given by the mediator;
 - (C) An attorney-mediator will not act as an attorney for either or both parties and no attorney-client relationship or attorney-client privilege will apply;
 - (D) The rules pertaining to confidentiality;
 - (E) The basis for termination of mediation;

Kane County Local Rule

- (F) The proposed resolution of the mediated issues will be documented in a written summary. This summary will form the basis of the formal mediated agreement presented to the Court for approval;
 - (G) Each party shall be strongly encouraged to obtain independent legal counsel to assist and advise him/her throughout the mediation; and
 - (H) Legal counsel for either party will not be present at any mediation session without the agreement of the parties and the mediator.
- (g) The Mediation Process. At the initial session, the mediator shall provide the parties with a written agreement outlining the guidelines under which mediation shall occur and the expectations of the parties and mediator. This initial agreement shall include at a minimum, all of the foregoing information above in (f) (5) (A)-(H). Either or both of the parties shall be permitted to consult their respective legal counsel before executing this agreement. The mediator shall assess the ability and willingness of the parties to mediate at the orientation session and throughout the process, and shall advise the parties in the event the case is inappropriate for mediation.
- (h) Termination of Mediation. The parties shall attend mediation until such time as they shall reach an agreement on the issues or the mediator or the Court suspends or terminates mediation. The mediator shall immediately advise the Court in writing if he/she suspends or terminates mediation or in the event that either or both parties fail to comply with the terms of this paragraph.
- (i) Mediation Report.
- (1) The report to the court shall be made on the [form](#) approved by the Administrative Office of the Illinois Courts (“AOIC”).
 - (2) In the event an agreement is reached on any of the issues in addition to the form report, the mediator shall supply a written summary of the agreement to counsel and the Court.
- (j) Discovery. Only written discovery shall be allowed until mediation is terminated by order of the court.
- (k) Payment of Fees. The mediator shall charge on an hourly basis for the time spent during mediation and the cost for mediation shall be shared equally by the parties, unless the Court directs otherwise in an order or is otherwise agreed to by the parties. This hourly fee shall be paid to the mediator at the time of each session for the time spent in mediation at the session. Along with the hourly fee, the mediator may request an advance deposit equal to two hours of mediation services to be paid at the first session. Such deposit may be applied to services rendered by the mediator outside of the mediation session, such as telephone conferences, correspondence, consultation with attorneys or other individuals, preparation of the Mediator Report, and any other work performed by the mediator on behalf of the

Kane County Local Rule

parties. Any additional fees that exceed the deposit or the fees collected at the time of sessions for services rendered by the mediator shall be paid as required by the mediator. In the event payments are not made as required under this rule, or otherwise agreed to by the mediator and the parties, the mediation process may be suspended by the mediator pending compliance.

- (1) **Statistics.** The Family Division Administrative Assistant will be responsible for all statistical data. Data shall include the number of cases referred to mediation, the number of low-income cases referred, the number and duration of sessions per case and the final outcome of each case. The statistics shall be forwarded, annually, to the Chief Judge of the Sixteenth Judicial Circuit and the Presiding Judge of the Family Division. The Chief Judge shall report annually to the Supreme Court of Illinois on this mediation program, including a count of the number of cases assigned to Court Ordered Mediation and the results achieved.

14.16A PARENTING COORDINATOR (Illinois Supreme Court Rule 909)

- (a) **Appointment.** The court may appoint a Parenting Coordinator when it finds the following:

- (1) The parties failed to adequately cooperate and communicate with regard to issues involving their child(ren), or have been unable to implement a parenting plan or parenting schedule;
- (2) Mediation has not been successful or has been determined by the judge to be inappropriate; or
- (3) The appointment of a Parenting Coordinator is in the best interests of the child(ren) involved in the proceedings.

Notwithstanding the above, the court may appoint a Parenting Coordinator by agreement of the parties.

- (b) **Qualifications.** Minimum requirements to be a Parenting Coordinator include:

- (1) Possess a *juris doctor* or a master's degree in social work, psychology, or counseling or higher, or an equivalent degree in a related field;
- (2) Have at least five years of experience in law, mental health, or a related field;
- (3) Complete an approved course on domestic violence; and
- (4) Attend at least four hours per year of continuing education programs, which shall address, at a minimum, psychological issues, and the needs of children in cases of family separation and family dynamics.

Kane County Local Rule

The court may waive requirements in paragraphs (1)-(4) above, at its own discretion.

- (c) Application and Parenting Coordinator List. The application may be found on the Kane County Law Library & Self-Help Legal Center website. Completed applications should be submitted to the Family Division Administrative Assistant who will give them to the presiding judge for approval.

A list of those approved to be Parenting Coordinators will be kept by the Family Division Administrative Assistant and updated at least every other year.

- (d) Confidentiality. Communications with the Parenting Coordinator shall not be confidential, except that upon the express written agreement of both parties and the Parenting Coordinator, the court may deem all or any specific part of the communications with the Parenting Coordinator to be confidential, if such designation appears to be in the best interests of the child(ren).

- (e) Scope of Duties. The Parenting Coordinator shall:

- (1) Be free to report knowledge of child abuse and have the immunity of a mandated reporter of child abuse
- (2) Not make any recommendations that substantially alter or reconfigure the parties' time-sharing arrangements, alter an award of majority parenting time, designation of custodian, alter the child support obligation and/or percentage allocation of child related expenses, or substantially interfere with a party's contact with the minor children. These decisions are reserved for the Circuit Court of the 16th Judicial Circuit, Kane County, Illinois for adjudication, or other appropriate Court depending on the residence of the minor children
- (3) Not have any decision-making authority which is the sole province of the Court
- (4) Not serve as a custody evaluator in any proceeding involving one or more parties for whom the Parenting Coordinator has provided parenting coordination services

Kane County Local Rule

- (5) Not be held liable for civil damages for any act or omission in the scope of the Parenting Coordinators employment or function, unless the Parenting Coordinator acted in bad faith or with malicious purpose, or in a manner exhibiting wanton and willful disregard of the rights, safety, or property of another. If any party believes that there exists a grievance with the Parenting Coordinator which cannot be resolved, that party may bring a motion to have the Parenting Coordinator relieved, provided that the party has first met and conferred with the Parenting Coordinator in an effort to resolve the grievance.
- (f) Duties of the Parenting Coordinator. Subject to the parties' Allocation Judgment and any orders relating to child support and allocation of expenses, the Parenting Coordinator shall make recommendations to resolve:
- (1) Parenting disputes
 - (2) Financial disputes relating to children's expenses
 - (3) Conflicts concerning decision-making and parental access related to the minor children
- (g) Duties of the Parties:
- (1) Each party agrees that the use of a Parenting Coordinator will provide a more flexible, responsive, and effective way of resolving disputes concerning their child(ren) that otherwise would be made in formal court proceedings by a judge
 - (2) Each party shall ensure that the Parenting Coordinator has a method of communication with them (voicemail, e-mail and/or text) which is always activated, available for use, and allows prompt transmission of information
 - (3) Each party shall at all times keep the Parenting Coordinator advised of their current address and telephone number
 - (4) Each party agrees to give the Parenting Coordinator the power to gather information through interview, correspondence, or other informal means, and to make the recommendations herein described based upon the information provided to and obtained by the Parenting Coordinator

Kane County Local Rule

- (5) Except in cases of emergency, the parties shall submit disputes to the Parenting Coordinator prior to seeking relief from the court
- (h) Subjects of Recommendations. Recommendations to be made by the Parenting Coordinator, subject to the parties Allocation Judgment and any orders relating to child support and allocation of expenses, shall include but not be limited to:
- (1) Geographic restrictions on a child's residence while in the care of either or both parents reasonably necessary to make existing timeshare arrangement practical
 - (2) The time and schedule for a child's opportunities to spend holidays, vacations, and special days in each parent's possession and/or household
 - (3) Additional parenting time for a special event or particular circumstance
 - (4) Recommendations concerning a child's participation in extracurricular activities and programs, including but not limited to sports, sports camps, academic enhancement activities, and religious education programs
 - (5) Parental decisions concerning health care management including medical, dental, orthodontic, mental health and vision care, as well as scheduling of medical, therapeutic, and other appointments
 - (6) Parental decisions concerning education, including choice of schools, tutoring, participation in gifted or special education programs, scheduling of appointments, including but not limited to, educational appointments such as SAT/ACT courses
 - (7) Vacation or transportation issues
 - (8) Clarification of provisions in the Court-ordered parenting plan
 - (9) Communication with a child(ren) when they are with the other parent
 - (10) Communication between the parties
- (i) Entry of Recommendations. The Parenting Coordinator recommendations shall:
- (1) Be immediately effective regardless of appeal or challenge
 - (2) Be in writing to all parties and counsel
 - (3) Specify which party shall present the Order to the Court for its entry
 - (4) Be entered as an Order of the Court within seven (7) days of written transmission to the parties
- (j) Challenges to Recommendations:

Kane County Local Rule

- (1) A party reserves the right to challenge the recommendation by notifying the Parenting Coordinator and the other party in writing, by email or Our Family Wizard, that they intend to challenge the recommendation. A party challenging the recommendation has five (5) days from entry of the Order to notify the Parenting Coordinator and the other party in writing of any challenge, otherwise the recommendation shall be deemed binding upon the parties.
- (2) Each party shall provide to the Parenting Coordinator copies of unresolved or otherwise relevant documents, unless protected by attorney-client privilege, relating to sect. (h) Subjects of Recommendations, and all orders of the Court relating to custody and/or visitation and/or allocation of child related expenses within five (5) business days after the entry of the Order.
- (3) Copies of all pleadings filed subsequently by either party concerning such matters shall be served on the Parenting Coordinator. Each party shall promptly provide the Parenting Coordinator all reasonable records, documentation, and information requested by the Parenting Coordinator.

(k) Compensation of the Parenting Coordinator:

Subject to the provisions of the client service agreement that the parties shall execute with the Parenting Coordinator, the Parenting Coordinator's fees are \$300.00 per hour.

The terms of the client service agreement or other contract between the Parenting Coordinator and each party shall also apply.

Time spent in interviewing, review of records and correspondence, telephone conversations, letters, texts, memorandums, reports or other document preparation, court preparation, settlement conferences and any other time (including travel time) invested in connection with serving as Parenting Coordinator will be billed at the \$300.00 hourly rate.

Telephone calls, emails, and text messages to the Parenting Coordinator by either party are part of the process and will be billed at the \$300.00 hourly rate.

The Parenting Coordinator will require an advance deposit of \$1,500.00, with any balance credit to be returned to the parties at the end of the Parenting Coordinator's tenure.

Kane County Local Rule

Once the initial advance deposit is exhausted, the Parenting Coordinator may request an additional deposit or bill the parties monthly.

The Parenting Coordinator shall be paid within fourteen (14) days of receipt of billing.

Any objection to the Parenting Coordinator's bills must be brought to the parties' and the Parenting Coordinator's attention in written form within seven (7) days of the billing date, otherwise the billing shall be deemed agreed to and accepted.

The Parenting Coordinator shall not be required to perform any work if there are outstanding unpaid fees.

In order to prevent either party from frustrating the purposes of this process by failing to pay fees, the Parenting Coordinator may elect to continue to provide services despite nonpayment, and shall be entitled to payment for such services.

The Parenting Coordinator may, at their discretion, elect to bill one party for certain services, should the Parenting Coordinator determine that said party is abusing the Parenting Coordination process.

The Court reserves jurisdiction to enforce the provisions of the client service agreement and this Local Court Rule.

14.17 KIDS 1st MANDATORY PARENTING EDUCATION PROGRAM

- (a) The parenting education program in the Sixteenth Judicial Circuit, Kane County, Illinois, shall be known as [KIDS 1st](#).
- (b) In all cases involving minor children brought under the [IMDMA](#) or the [IPA](#), the parents or guardians of the children shall be required to attend [KIDS 1st](#) within sixty (60) days from the commencement of the action or thirty (30) days from when service is completed on defendant, whichever is later. Each party's attendance and completion of [KIDS 1st](#) is mandatory and the court shall not excuse attendance unless the reason is documented in the record and a finding is made that excusing one or both parents from attendance is in the best interests of the children.
- (c) The judge shall order one or both of the parties to pay the fees attendant thereto. The program fees for attendance by the parties shall be set by General Order of the Chief Judge.

Kane County Local Rule

- (d) If a party fails to attend and complete [KIDS 1st](#) within the initial time provided above, that party may be charged a late fee which shall be collected by the circuit clerk.
- (e) The Court may impose sanctions on any party willfully failing to complete the [KIDS 1st](#).

14.18 GUARDIANS AD LITEM, ATTORNEYS FOR CHILDREN AND CHILD'S REPRESENTATIVES

- (a) The Presiding Judge of the Family Division or his/her designee shall maintain a list of attorneys qualified to be appointed in matters covered under Article IX of the Illinois Supreme Court Rules as Guardians *ad Litem* (“GAL”), Child Representatives, or Attorneys for Children.
- (b) In order to qualify for the approved list, each applicant for the list shall meet the following minimum requirements:
 - (1) Each attorney shall be licensed and in good standing with the Illinois Supreme Court.
 - (2) Each attorney shall have attended the education program created by the Illinois State Bar Association for education of attorneys appointed in parental allocation or child custody cases or equivalent education programs consisting of a minimum of ten (10) hours of continuing legal education credit within the two (2) years prior to the date the attorney qualifies to be appointed. The ten (10) hours should include courses in child development; ethics in child custody cases; relevant substantive law in custody, guardianship and visitation issues; domestic violence; family dynamics including substance abuse and mental health issues; and education on the roles and responsibilities of the GAL, Child Representatives and Attorneys for Children. Attendance at programs approved by the Sixteenth Judicial Circuit may be included as a portion of this continuing education requirement.
 - (3) To remain on the approved list, each attorney shall supply to the Presiding Judge of Family Division or his/her designee proof of one or more of the following:
 - (A) Completion of continuing legal education regarding GAL training consisting of at least ten (10) hours within the last two (2) year period;
 - (B) Any teaching or lecturing on the subject of the qualifications or duties of the GAL, Child Representatives, or Attorneys for Children within the preceding two (2) years, and said course(s) cumulated at least three (3) credit hours; and
 - (C) Service as a court appointed GAL, Child Representative, or Attorney for Children in at least three (3) cases per year over the last two (2) consecutive years, together with a minimum of three (3) CLE hours relating to child custody issues during the same time period.
 - (4) Each attorney must complete the [Guardian ad Litem, Attorney for Child, and Child Representative](#) application provided by the Sixteenth Judicial Circuit and

Kane County Local Rule

- submit it to the Presiding Judge of the Family Division along with a Certification of Attendance at continuing education.
- (5) Each attorney must be a licensed attorney for a minimum of three (3) years (or be an associate with a firm which has a qualified attorney), must be experienced in the practice of Family Law, must maintain professional liability insurance coverage and must be trained in the representation of children.
- (6) Each attorney must adhere to the minimum duties and responsibilities of Attorneys for Minor Children as delineated in [Supreme Court Rule 907](#).
- (c) An attorney who wishes to be considered for appointment as Attorney, GAL, or Child's Representative for a child shall make application to the Presiding Judge of the Family Division. An attorney's renewal shall be made on or before May 30 of each year. The application shall set forth the Applicant's hourly rate for Guardian *ad Litem*, Attorney for the Child and Child's Representative services. The office of the Presiding Judge shall keep a list of qualified attorneys, including their hourly rates, which shall be made available to family court judges and placed on the [Kane County Law Library](#) website.
- (d) In the event that the court deems it is in the best interests of the child or children to have a GAL, Child's Representative or an Attorney for the Children appointed in a proceeding under Article IX of the Supreme Court Rules, but finds that the parties are both indigent, the court may appoint an attorney from the approved list to serve *pro bono*. The Presiding Judge of the Family Division shall rotate the appointment of *pro bono* representation from attorneys on the approved list. Each attorney on the approved list shall be required to accept one *pro bono* appointment each calendar year.
- (e) In appointing an Attorney, GAL or Child's Representative for a child, the court shall consider the experience of the attorney, the complexity and factual circumstances of the case, the recommendations or agreements of the parties, the geographic location of the child's residence, the parties' residences, and the office location of the Attorney for the Child, the GAL or Child's Representative.
- (f) An Attorney for a Child, GAL or Child's Representative shall not be appointed as a mediator in the same case. A GAL shall not serve as the Attorney for the Child in the same case. The Child's Representative shall not serve as the Attorney for the Child or the GAL in the same case.
- (g) Whenever a Court appoints a Child's Representative or a GAL, the appointment order shall specify the tasks expected of the Child's Representative or GAL. The designated counsel for the parties shall forward a copy of the appointment order within five (5) days of entry thereof to the Attorney for the Child, the GAL and/or the Child's Representative.
- (h) Attorney for the Child, GAL and Child's Representative appointments shall be made

Kane County Local Rule

- pursuant to the standardized appointment order. In the appointment order, the court shall order the parties to pay retainer amounts to the Attorney for the Child, GAL or the Child's Representative by a certain date. The Attorney for the Child, GAL or the Child's Representative shall submit statements to litigants for services rendered within ninety (90) days of his or her appointment, and every subsequent ninety (90) day period thereafter during the course of his or her appointment. Unless otherwise determined by the Court, upon good cause shown, both parties shall be jointly and severally liable for the fees and costs of the Attorney for the Child, GAL and/or the Child's Representative.
- (i) The Attorney for the Child, GAL or Child's Representative shall, upon retention, file an appearance. The Attorney for the Child, GAL or Child's Representative shall be provided copies of all court orders and pleadings. The Attorney for the Child, GAL or Child's Representative shall be notified of all court appearances and conferences with the Judge and appear unless excused by the Court or by agreement of the parties including the Attorney for the Child, GAL, or Child's Representative. Failure to give proper notice to the Attorney for the Child, GAL or Child's Representative may result in sanctions including, but not limited to, the vacating of any resulting court order or judgment. There will be no fee for the filing of an Appearance as a court-appointed Attorney for the Child, GAL or Child's Representative.
 - (j) The parties' attorneys shall not interview the child(ren) without the consent of the Attorney for the Child, and/or GAL and/or Child's Representative. Either the Attorney for the Child, GAL or Child's Representative, or any of them, shall have the right to be present during any such interview.
 - (k) The Attorney for the Child and/or GAL and/or Child's Representative should take measures to protect the child from harm that may be incurred as a result of the litigation by striving to expedite the proceedings and encouraging settlement in order to reduce trauma that can be caused by litigation.
 - (l) Unless previously discharged, the court shall discharge the Attorney for the Child, the GAL and the Child's Representative at the conclusion of the performance of his/her duties. Unless previously discharged, the final order disposing of the issues resulting in the appointment shall act as a discharge of the court-appointed Attorney for the Child, GAL and Child's Representative.
 - (m) At a trial or hearing, the GAL shall make the Court aware of all facts which the Court should consider. At the discretion of the Court, the GAL shall submit a written or oral report(s) by a date certain designated by the Court. If the GAL submits a written report, it shall be impounded by the circuit clerk and shall not be open to viewing by the public. The GAL may be duly sworn as a witness and be subject to examination by all parties. At the discretion of the court, the GAL may be allowed to call and examine witnesses at trial.

Kane County Local Rule

- (n) The Attorney for the Child shall, at all times, act as the advocate for the child.
- (o) Standards relating to GAL
 - (1) During the pretrial stage of a case, the GAL shall use appropriate procedures to elicit facts which the Court should consider in deciding the case. The GAL shall obtain leave of Court to instigate depositions and to file pleadings.
 - (2) At a trial or hearing, the GAL shall make the Court aware of all facts which the Court should consider.
 - (3) At the discretion of the Court, the GAL shall submit a written or oral report(s) by a date certain designated by the Court.
 - (4) The GAL may be duly sworn as a witness and be subject to examination by all parties.
 - (5) At the discretion of the Court, the GAL may be allowed to call and examine witnesses at trial.
- (p) The Child's Representative shall, at all times, act in accordance with [750 ILCS 5/506 et seq.](#)

14.19 GUARDIAN AD LITEM FEES

- (a) GAL fees shall be paid promptly; and, unless otherwise agreed to by the GAL and the parties, shall be reduced to a Judgment and subject to a specific pay order consistent with [750 ILCS 506\(b\)](#).
- (b) Petitions for GAL fees may be heard by the court on a hand-up basis, upon notice to the parties, unless written objection is made by either party setting forth the basis for their objection. Otherwise, all proceedings on petitions for GAL fees shall be non-evidentiary and summary in nature.

14.20 EVALUATIONS PURSUANT TO SECTION 604.10(b) OF THE IMDMA

- (a) The Sixteenth Judicial Circuit may establish a [604.10\(b\)](#) List of Certified Evaluators, each of whom may be appointed from time to time to serve in the Court ordered [604.10\(b\)](#) witness program, under the direction and at the discretion of the Chief Judge and the Presiding Judge of the Family Division and according to the provisions as set out below.
- (b) **Applicants** for the program must file the required applications obtained through the Family Division with the Kane County Diagnostic Center, with supporting documentation in compliance with the following minimum criteria:
 - (1) Academic: Applicants must possess one of the following degrees or licenses in current good standing: PhD; PSY.D; LCSW; LCPC; MD; Master's Degree in a mental health field; and possess the requisite active practice licenses required by the State of Illinois;
 - (2) Professional: Applicants must have completed five (5) years of post-licensure practice. Practice must include education or training in the following areas of

Kane County Local Rule

child welfare; child development, domestic violence, physical/sexual abuse, and substance abuse. Applicants must maintain professional liability insurance.

- (3) Applicants must have the availability to conduct evaluations within a reasonable distance of Kane County;
- (4) Experience: Post-licensure practice must include no less than two (2) years' experience in two (2) or more of the following areas; families in distress, child or family experience and domestic violence; and
- (5) Applicants must be available and willing to accept one pro bono assignment annually.

(c) Certification

- (1) The list of [604.10\(b\)](#) Evaluators shall be maintained by the Kane County Diagnostic Center (KCDC), with a copy of the list provided to the Presiding Judge of the Family Division. The Director of the Diagnostic Center or his/her designee shall review each application to determine if the applicants possess the required educational background and experience to qualify as an evaluator of a child's best interests in cases relating to allocation of parental responsibilities.
- (2) After review of the application, the KCDC shall forward its recommendation to the Chief Judge and the Presiding Judge of the Family Division for approval.
- (3) The KCDC shall maintain the approved list. Each approved Evaluator must send proof of current licensure, current professional liability insurance and any change of address in a timely fashion, and provide annual proof not later than January 31st of the year in question of current licensure and professional liability insurance.
- (4) An approved Evaluator has the affirmative duty to inform the KCDC of any change in his/her licensure or any formal discipline. Upon receipt of this information, the KCDC shall inform the Chief Judge and Presiding Judge of the Family Division, along with any appropriate recommendations. Continued certification as an Evaluator is at the discretion of the Chief Judge, which may include but is not limited to a review of compliance with rules for evaluations as well as timeliness of reports.
- (5) The KCDC may review each Evaluator's performance for quality assurance, and shall report any non-compliance to the Chief Judge. The Chief Judge has the discretion to remove an Evaluator from the approved list at any time.

(d) Payment of Fees

- (1) The hourly fee of the Evaluator shall be fixed by the Chief Judge in consultation with the Presiding Judge of the Family Division and the Director of the KCDC. Presently, the rate is fixed at \$225, with a maximum fee in a standard case not exceeding \$7,875 or thirty-five (35) hours. This amount includes the costs of the investigation, testing, analysis and preparation of the report. The cost of depositions and trial testimony shall be the responsibility of the party seeking the testimony in accordance with the Evaluator's customary rate.

Kane County Local Rule

- (2) The court shall indicate in the appointing order whether the evaluation is to be conducted on a *pro bono* or reduced fee basis. The parties shall be ordered to pay a retainer to the Evaluator for all or a portion of the fee. Any balance due shall be paid by the parties as it comes due. However, non-payment shall not suspend the evaluation process, but should be promptly reported to the court. The court shall take appropriate action to insure payment of the Evaluator's fees and may enter a judgment accordingly. In the event that the evaluation process is terminated prior to completion due to settlement or otherwise, the Evaluator shall promptly refund any un-earned portion of the retainer.

(e) Duration of Evaluation and Report

- (1) A standard evaluation shall consist of up to thirty-five (35) hours of sessions, testing, analysis and preparation of the report. Evaluator requests for compensation in excess of thirty-five (35) hours will be granted only if approved by the court in advance for good cause shown (e.g. complex mental health issues, extraordinary large family groups). Prior to expending over thirty-five (35) hours, the Evaluator must present a written status report to the court and the parties documenting the number and need for proposed additional hours.
- (2) The evaluation should be concluded and the report submitted to the court and the parties within one hundred and twenty (120) days of the appointing order. The Evaluator shall immediately advise the court if the evaluation cannot be completed as ordered, in which case the court may grant additional time or appoint a different Evaluator.

Post-Decree Judicial Assignment List

Addendum to Local Court Rule 14.02

<u>Judge Parkhurst, 111- 2</u> <u>217-6</u>	<u>Judge Downs, 113-3</u>	<u>Judge Petersen, 201-1</u>	<u>Judge Flood,</u>
Grady (10)	Busch (6 ½)	Cruz (7)	Kliment (3)
Karayannis (3)	Brewe (6)	Pilmer (2)	Noverini (2 ½)
Fabian (3)	Sullivan (4)	Kostelny (3)	Brown (3 ½)
Morrow (1)	(Larson)	Simpson (2)	Spence (4 ½)
=====	(Sheldon)	Klein (1)	(O'Brien)
19	(Sheldon)	Eichmeyer (1)	(Wegner)
		Moran (1)	(Grometer)
	=====	=====	=====
	19.5	18	19.5

LEGEND:

Bold number after each underlined judge's name: Approximate number of years the judge has been in the division*

(Number) after judge's name: approximate number of years the judge was assigned to the family division in the past

(Judge's name): judges assigned to the family division more than 20 years ago; therefore cases unlikely to return

Number under ===== : total number of years of cases <20 years old that would be assigned per judge if returned on post-decree matters

*As of 10/1/2021