



VOICE OF CHILD REPORT INFORMATION FORM

WHY OBTAIN A VOICE OF CHILD REPORT? Research shows that children benefit from a process that is child centered and provides their parents with education, awareness and understanding of their “views”, or needs, wishes and thoughts about the separation process and the decisions being made that affect them. It is important that the practitioner providing this service be trained and knowledgeable as children should not be placed under pressure or asked direct questions about where they want to live.

WHAT IS THE PROCESS? In all cases, consent from each of the parents and children over the age of six (6) is required. The practitioner follows a standardized approach, giving the child an opportunity to share their experiences and any issues or concerns they may have. The meeting is confidential and private and only the child decides what information the practitioner will share and what may not be shared. If there are any concerns that what is shared may be detrimental to the child, the professional may terminate the process and/or not share information. The meetings take place in person unless circumstances limit that opportunity and can then take place via zoom. The meetings are typically no longer than one hour and perhaps less, depending upon the child and their age. If the meeting takes place via zoom, the parent/guardian must provide privacy for the meeting.

WHAT ARE THE OPTIONS FOR A REPORT? We offer three options of service for voice of child reports.

1. To have the children interviewed (often the case for more urgent or emergency issues), the practitioner will meet with each child twice (each party bringing them once), review any necessary background or court materials provided and complete the written report. This process can generally take place within fourteen (14) days. The fee for this service is \$800 plus HST for one child and each additional child is an additional \$300 plus HST.
2. The second option includes the same process as Option 1 and adds a meeting with each of the parents prior to meeting with the children. This process is generally completed within thirty (30) days. The fee for this service is \$1,000 plus HST and each additional child is an additional \$300 plus HST.
3. The third option includes the process described in Options 1 and 2 and adds contact with third parties such as police, school, or the CAS and possibly other family members as identified and agreed upon by counsel and the parents. In this model there will be an opportunity for verbal feedback prior to the completion of the written Report, either at a scheduled mediation session or a disclosure meeting. Please contact us to discuss the estimated fee for this level of service, which is more substantive in nature.

CHILDREN HAVE A VOICE, NOT A CHOICE. Children will not be asked to “decide” what should happen. The interview provides them with an opportunity to provide input about decisions affecting them and to have those shared in an appropriate setting.

THIS IS AN OPEN SERVICE. The information gathered and discussed, and the final written report can be used in a court or arbitration process.

WHAT SHOULD THE PARENTS TELL THE CHILDREN? We ask that parents provided a unified message to the children and a suggestion would be:

*“Your mother/father and I are working out what the best plans for everyone might be in our separation. We thought it may be helpful for you to meet with a person who works with children when parents separate and divorce. This person would give you a chance to talk about your thoughts and feelings **and if you want them to**, they will share that information with us. You will not be asked to choose between us.*

WHAT HAPPENS AFTER THE MEETINGS ARE COMPLETE? The information will be shared with you in the Report or feedback meeting so we suggest not questioning the child about what was said.