

**REPORT OF THE
TEXAS ASSOCIATION FOR MARRIAGE AND FAMILY THERAPY
PARENTING COORDINATION TASKFORCE:**

**Recommended Practice Guidelines for a Family Systems Model of
Parenting Coordination within the Context of Texas Family Law**

**Submitted March 4, 2007 to the TAMFT Board by the following Taskforce Members;
approved 4-27-2007:**

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The PC Taskforce was appointed by TAMFT President Dr. Michael Bishop on September 12, 2006 to address the following goals:

1. Review the Texas statute for parenting coordination, including future proposed changes from the Legislative Council;
2. Review currently available practice guidelines, including AFCC guidelines;
3. Review our family therapy Code of Ethics from the TX LMFT Board and from AAMFT; and
4. Propose for TAMFT Board adoption practice guidelines and training guidelines which comply with Texas statutory requirements and MFT Codes of Ethics.

Definition of Parenting Coordination Practice for Texas Licensed Marriage and Family Therapists Involved in the Practice of Parenting Coordination in Texas

Definition of Practice for Licensed Marriage and Family Therapists and Associates (“LMFTs”):

Parenting coordination is a practice which utilizes concepts, methods, and processes from a family systems approach to assist binuclear family parents in resolving co-parenting issues arising from an order in a suit affecting the parent-child relationship.

Duties of the court-appointed Parenting Coordinator (“PC”) are limited to matters which will aid the parents in the following areas in accordance with Texas Family Code §153.601-611:

- (1) identifying disputed issues;
- (2) reducing misunderstandings;
- (3) clarifying priorities;
- (4) exploring possibilities for problem solving;
- (5) developing methods of collaboration in parenting;
- (6) developing a parenting plan; and
- (7) complying with the court's order regarding conservatorship or possession of and access to the child.

Texas Family Code Sections 153.606-609 provide practice guidelines for PCs. The role of a PC is to empower parents to self-determine a parenting plan in the best interest of their child(ren) and to resolve conflicts regarding implementing the parenting plan through effective communication. Agreements between the parents should be encouraged in order to help them communicate more effectively. However, no modifications to existing orders, judgments, or the decree should be made. All agreements made by the parties with the assistance of the PC while a suit is pending shall be in writing, signed by the parties and their attorneys, if any, and filed with the court. In addition, the PC is required to submit a report to the court as often as is ordered by the court or every 90 days stating only whether or not the parenting coordination should continue. The PC has the authority to determine the intervention procedures and techniques to use in working with the parents to achieve effective co-parenting. The court may remove the PC if both parties request removal or if one party requests removal and good cause is shown to the court. Fees shall be allocated between the parents as determined by the court.

Supplemental legal definitions:

- (1) Alternative Dispute Resolution [ADR] processes and voluntary dispute resolution procedures— includes binding or non-binding arbitration by agreement only; binding or non-binding mediation by agreement or court imposed order; collaborative law by agreement only; and parenting coordination by agreement or court imposed order.
- (2) Conciliation—As described by Judge Debra Lehrmann [360th District Court in Fort Worth, TX] in a 2001 ABA Family Law Section presentation, the conciliatory phase of a lawsuit is distinguished from the adversarial phase by whether or not the professional intervener testifies in court. Conciliatory processes encourage parents to work together, while adversarial processes focus on winning which escalates the conflict and creates greater barriers to co-parenting. The preamble to Texas Family Code 153.601 states: “The legislature further finds that conciliatory forms of dispute resolution, including mediation and the use of PCs, promote the policy set forth in Section 153.001, Family Code.” The identified policy is to promote healthy co-parenting by assuring contact with both parents who can work together; providing a safe, stable, and nonviolent environment; and encouraging separated parents to share parenting responsibilities.
- (3) Confidential process— In accordance with Texas Family Code 153.606(e), “A PC may not: (1) be compelled to produce work product developed during the appointment as PC; (2) be required to disclose the source of any information; (3) submit a report into evidence, except as required by Section 153.608; or (4) testify in court.”
- (4) High conflict case— The court can impose an order for parenting coordination when “the parties demonstrate a pattern of: (A) repetitious litigation; (B) anger and distrust; (C) difficulty in communicating about and cooperating in the care of their children; or (D) other behaviors that in the discretion of the court warrant the appointment of a PC.”[153.601(2)]

- (5) Parenting plan—is a written plan to be included in a court order which defines the rights and duties of both parents, parenting time of the child with each parent, child support, ways to minimize the child’s exposure to any harmful parental conflict, ways to address the child’s changing needs, and a dispute resolution process for future disputes.
- (6) Suit Affecting the Parent-Child Relationship [SAPCR]—is a lawsuit which details court orders for how a child is to be parented without regard to whether the parents are presently or have ever been married to each other. Texas Family Code Chapter 153 is the primary legal guide for making these determinations to be incorporated in a parenting plan.

Process of Parenting Coordination:

As a conciliatory process, parenting coordination provides an alternative to litigation for solving parenting conflicts. The parenting coordination process includes an integration of interventions based on the level of conflict and skill resources of the PC including, at a minimum, family therapy, family mediation, and co-parenting education.

Distinguishing levels of conflict in family systems is an ongoing challenge. Even reaching a consensus definition of family violence has not been achieved by the mental health or legal communities. Continued work on effective ways to assess level of conflict and interventions which are appropriate for parenting coordination is necessary.

Cases that have been determined to include family violence, untreated serious mental illness, or untreated active substance abuse following appropriate individual and family assessment methods shall be referred to more evaluative forensic interventions.

**Credentials and Training for
Texas Licensed Marriage and Family Therapists
Involved in the Practice of Parenting Coordination in Texas**

- (1) PCs who are also LMFTs in Texas practice under their LMFT license. Therefore, they must first meet LMFT credentials and training standards which include course work in theoretical foundations of marriage and family therapy [1 course], assessment and treatment in marriage and family therapy [4 courses], human development, gender, multicultural issues, and family studies [2 courses], psychopathology [1 course], professional ethics [1 course], applied professional research [1 course], and supervised clinical practicum [12 months]. [See Appendix A for complete licensure requirements.]
- (2) Texas statutory guidelines for PCs additionally require at least 8 hours of family violence dynamics training provided by a family violence service provider. See Texas Family Code Section 153.610. This training should be refreshed every other year.
- (3) A minimum 16-hour course in parenting coordination shall be taken by all PCs. See Texas Family Code Section 153.610. The course should include the following topics:
 - Texas Family Law related to Parenting Coordination
 - Parenting Coordination Process & Techniques
 - Family Mediation
 - Systemic Family Dynamics Training, including the Divorcing Process
 - High Conflict Family Assessment, including Family Violence
 - Child Development
 - Parenting Education Models and Techniques
 - Ethics [especially as related to high conflict and protracted custody cases]
- (4) Continuing education in parenting coordination should be included in meeting licensure continuing education requirements.
- (5) Membership and participation in the American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy (“AAMFT”) and the Texas Association for Marriage and Family Therapy (“TAMFT”) is highly recommended as a continuing education resource and for development of the practice of parenting coordination.
- (6) PCs who are working in the collaborative law setting shall also have training in the collaborative law interdisciplinary team process.
- (7) In addition, the following criteria adapted from Guidelines for Parenting Coordinators developed by the Association of Family and Conciliation Courts (“AFCC”) are highly recommended:
 - (a) Training and experience in interest-based negotiation style of family mediation
 - (b) Extensive practical experience in the profession with high conflict or litigating parents
 - (c) Professional competence in the parenting coordination process acquired and maintained by receiving comprehensive training (See Appendix B) and participating in educational activities promoting professional growth as well as peer consultation
- (8) A summary of recommended PC credentials and training is included as Appendix C.

Ethical Guidelines for Texas Licensed Marriage and Family Therapists Involved in the Practice of Parenting Coordination in Texas

Parenting coordination in Texas is defined by the Texas Family Code § 153-601-611. PCs may be appointed by the court or by agreement of the parties in high-conflict or other cases where a PC has been determined to be in the best interests of the children in order to assist the parties in resolving parenting issues.

PCs are required to follow the law governing the practice of parenting coordination in Texas. In addition to following Texas law governing parenting coordination, LMFTs practicing under their Texas licenses are also required to follow the ethical standards governing the practice of marriage and family therapy as defined by the Texas Board of Examiners of Marriage and Family Therapists in Chapter 801 of the Texas Administrative Code.

Ethical standards for marriage and family therapists are also defined and enforced by the AAMFT. The AAMFT Code of Ethics is binding upon all members of AAMFT in order to honor the public trust in marriage and family therapists.

The following ethical guidelines for LMFTs were defined by the TAMFT Parenting Coordination Taskforce in order to provide guidance so that both Texas laws governing parenting coordination and appropriate ethical standards are being followed by LMFTs involved in the practice of parenting coordination (“LMFT-PCs”).

Key ethical areas that should be outlined in each LMFT-PC’s services agreement and communicated directly and openly with clients and their attorneys include:

- (1) Informed consent
- (2) Multiple relationships
- (3) Confidentiality
- (4) Relationships with involved professionals
- (5) Termination of parenting coordination services
- (6) Financial arrangements

Other ethical areas that shall be considered by the LMFT-PC in practicing parenting coordination include:

- (1) Professional competence and integrity
- (2) Advertising

Ethical Guidelines Outlined in PC Services Agreement

Informed Consent

Appropriate informed consent is obtained from the participants in a parenting coordination case and should be clearly and directly communicated in the PC Services Agreement. The content of the informed consent should include a description of parenting coordination and specific duties of the PC according to the Texas Family Code as well as additional duties set forth in the order or agreed upon by the clients. The clients should also be informed of their rights to confidentiality (see below) and the limits of confidentiality (see below) as a result of giving their informed consent.

Relationships with Clients

LMFT-PCs should avoid conditions and multiple relationships with clients that could interfere with their impartiality or create a professional conflict. Such relationships include, but are not limited to:

- (1) Business or close personal relationships with a client or the client’s immediate family
- (2) Anyone with whom the PC has had a prior sexual relationship
- (3) Having a sexual relationship with a client either during the period of the parenting coordination services or following termination
- (4) Becoming the PC after serving as a therapy, consultant, coach, or another mental health role to either one of the clients or a family member
- (5) Becoming the therapist, consultant, coach, or another mental health role for either one of the clients or a family member either during or after the term of PC involvement
- (6) Serving as a custody evaluator either before, during, or after the term of PC involvement with the family, because of the confidential nature of the PC process under the Texas Family Code (see below)
- (7) Accepting gifts, favors, loans, or other items from clients, attorneys, or others involved in the parenting coordination process

Confidentiality

Consistent with the AAMFT Code of Ethics, confidentiality is an ethical and legal practice of a professional to protect client communication, information, identity, and records of diagnosis,

evaluation and plans that are created or maintained by a professional. Adherence of confidentiality will be governed by the Texas Mental Health and Safety code (Chapter 611) and other applicable laws related to mental health records and communication.

Also consistent with the parenting coordination statute under the Texas Family Code, parenting coordination is clearly identified as a conciliatory form of Alternative Dispute Resolution (“ADR”) which is also confidential (See Chapter 154, Texas Civil Practice and Remedies Code).

Therefore, an LMFT-PC shall maintain confidentiality regarding the information shared during the parenting coordination process, except as set forth under “Exceptions to Confidentiality” or by written agreement of the respective parties.

Exceptions to Confidentiality

Exceptions to confidentiality include the following circumstances:

- (1) When the clients sign a written release of information for a specified purpose and recipient (such as the parenting coordination clients’ attorneys), information shall be disclosed by the LMFT-PC unless disclosure is judged by the LMFT-PC to be harmful to any of the parenting coordination clients, including the children.
- (2) When child abuse or neglect is suspected, a report shall be made to the Child Protective Services (“CPS”) Division of the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services, other state agencies, or local/state law enforcement officers. Abuse/neglect of an elder or disabled person must also be reported.
- (3) When a client or a member of the client’s family is a danger to self or others, a report shall be made to the appropriate authorities.
- (4) When required by law such as the requirement under the parenting coordination statute that a written report be submitted to the court, a report shall be filed with the court as often as ordered stating only whether or not the parenting coordination should continue.
- (5) When a complaint has been filed with the LMFT’s licensing board, information shall be provided as required or deemed necessary in order to respond to the complaint.
- (6) When required by management audits, financial audits, program evaluations, or research (by client permission only), in accordance with Texas Health and Safety Code Section 611.004(a)(3).

Relationships with Involved Professionals

The “Relationships with Involved Professionals” section of the PC Services Agreement should address, at a minimum, the following areas:

- (1) Confidentiality
- (2) Release of information
- (3) Boundaries with involved professionals

Confidentiality

As discussed above, the parenting coordination process is confidential. No information obtained during the parenting coordination process will be disclosed without a written release of information or in accordance with other “Exceptions to Confidentiality” defined above.

Release of Information

Upon receipt of a written release of information, information will be shared with individuals indicated on the release, but only to the extent necessary to achieve the purpose of consultation. Information will not be shared, even with consent, if it is judged by the LMFT-PC to be harmful to any of the clients, including the children, or the parenting coordination process and its intent under the Texas statute, i.e. to assist the parents in resolving parenting issues outside of the litigation process.

Boundaries with Involved Professionals

Appropriate boundaries with other professionals involved with the clients including attorneys, therapists, custody evaluators, and financial advisors shall be maintained by the LMFT-PC in order to protect the integrity of the parenting coordination process. Other professionals will be utilized to the extent that they are helpful to the process and its intent under the Texas statute, i.e. to assist the parents in resolving parenting issues outside of the litigation process.

Termination of Parenting Coordination Services

The “Termination of Parenting Coordination Services” section of the PC Services Agreement should address, at a minimum, the following areas:

- (1) LMFT-PC’s philosophy regarding termination
- (2) Reasons for termination
- (3) Termination plan
- (4) Referrals

LMFT-PC’s Philosophy Regarding Termination

The LMFT-PC’s philosophy or perspective about termination should be communicated in the PC Services

Agreement. For example, are you willing to continue to see the clients periodically when they need help in the future or do you have a structured process that they must complete in a particular sequence?

Reasons for Termination

The court order for PC services may be terminated by the court following the request of one parent with good cause or the agreement of both parents. The reasons for the PC recommending termination to the court should be specifically explained to parents but cannot be reported to the court, for example:

- (1) Goals are attained
- (2) The LMFT-PC is unable to help the clients
- (3) Other services are necessary
- (4) Family violence risk is determined
- (5) Nonpayment of fees

Termination Plan

A specific plan for terminating should be described in the PC Services Agreement.

Referrals

A plan for referring to another PC should be described in the event that the LMFT-PC is unable to assist the parenting coordination clients. The LMFT-PC should also determine what their participation will be in helping clients transfer to a new PC and whether or not they will share records, consult with the new PC, and/or charge for consulting time.

A plan should also be outlined for referrals to other professionals when necessary for individual therapy, evaluation, or other professional services.

Financial arrangements

The amount of fees and responsibility for payment should be outlined in the PC Services Agreement as agreed to by the parenting coordination clients and their attorneys or by court order. Once the parenting coordination services have begun, the LMFT-PC will provide reasonable notice of any changes in fees or other charges.

In addition:

- (1) LMFT-PCs refrain from accepting goods and services from clients in return for services rendered.
- (2) LMFT-PCs do not offer or accept kickbacks, rebates, bonuses, or other remuneration for referrals from attorneys or other professionals.

- (3) LMFT-PCs give reasonable notice to clients with unpaid balances of their intent to seek collection by agency or legal recourse. When such action is taken, LMFT-PCs will not disclose confidential information.

Other Ethical Guidelines

Professional competence and integrity

LMFT-PCs maintain high standards of professional competence and integrity, including:

- (1) Pursuing knowledge of new developments in marriage and family therapy and parenting coordination through education, training, or supervised experience.
- (2) Acquiring adequate knowledge of and adherence to applicable laws, ethics, and professional standards.
- (3) Seeking appropriate professional assistance for their personal problems or conflicts that may impair work performance or clinical judgment.
- (4) Maintaining accurate and adequate clinical and financial records.
- (5) Practicing parenting coordination only after appropriate education and training.
- (6) Refusing to diagnose, treat, or advise on problems outside the recognized boundaries of their competencies.

Advertising

LMFT-PCs engage in appropriate informational activities, including those that enable the public, referral sources, or others to choose professional services on an informed basis. Specifically, they:

- (1) Accurately represent in any advertisements and publications their competencies, education, training, and experience relevant to their practice of marriage and family therapy and parenting coordination.
- (2) Claim as credentials only those earned degrees: (a) from institutions accredited by regional accreditation sources recognized by the United States Department of Education, (b) from institutions recognized by states or provinces that license or certify marriage and family therapists, or (c) from equivalent foreign institutions.
- (3) Correct, wherever possible, false, misleading, or inaccurate information and representations made by others concerning the therapist's qualifications, services, or products.
- (4) Do not represent themselves as providing parenting coordination and/or other specialized services unless they have the appropriate education, training, or supervised experience.

APPENDIX A

Texas Administrative Code

Title 22. Examining Boards

Part 35. Marriage and Family Therapists

Chapter 801. Licensure and Regulation of Marriage and Family Therapists

New Amendments effective July 2, 2006

The rules relating to licensing and regulation of Marriage and Family Therapists and Marriage and Family Therapist Associates:

§801.73. Required Application Materials.

- (a) Application form. The application form shall contain:
1. specific information regarding personal data, employment and type of practice, other state licenses and certifications held, felony or misdemeanor convictions, educational background including direct clinical experience, supervised experience, and references;
 2. a statement that the applicant has read the Act and the board rules and agrees to abide by them;
 3. the applicant's permission to the board to seek any information or references it deems necessary to determine the applicant's qualifications;
 4. a statement that the applicant, if issued a license, shall return the license to the board upon the revocation or suspension of the license;
 5. a statement that the applicant understands that the fees submitted in the licensure process are non-refundable;
 6. the applicant's signature and date of signature; and
 7. an official transcript.
- (b) Supervised experience form. The supervised experience form shall be completed by the applicant's supervisor and is valid only when it bears the supervisor's signature.
- (c) Course work. An applicant must have the official transcript(s) showing all relevant course work sent directly to the board office.
- (d) Other documents. Vita, resume, and/or other documentation of the applicant's credentials may be submitted.
- (e) Effective September 1, 2006, all applicants for licensure must submit proof of successful completion of the jurisprudence examination at the time of application. The jurisprudence

examination must be completed no more than six months prior to the date of licensure application.

SUBCHAPTER E. CRITERIA FOR DETERMINING FITNESS OF APPLICANTS FOR EXAMINATION AND LICENSURE

§801.91. Purpose. The purpose of this subchapter is to establish the criteria by which the board will determine the qualifications required of applicants for approval for examination and licensure.

§801.92. Finding of Non-Fitness for Licensure.

The substantiation of any of the following items related to an applicant may be, as the board determines, the basis for the denial of an associate license or a regular license of the applicant:

1. lack of the necessary skills and abilities to provide adequate marriage and family therapy services in independent practice;
2. any misrepresentation in the application or other materials submitted to the Board;
3. the violation of any provision of the Act or this chapter in effect at the time of application which is applicable to an unlicensed person; or
4. the violation of any provision of code of ethics which would have applied if the applicant had been a licensee at the time of the violation.

§801.93. Finding of Non-Fitness for Licensure

Subsequent to Issuance of Licensure. The board may take disciplinary action based upon information received after issuance of a license, if such information had been received prior to issuance of license and would have been the basis for denial.

SUBCHAPTER F. ACADEMIC REQUIREMENTS FOR EXAMINATION AND LICENSURE

§801.111. Purpose. This subchapter establishes the academic requirements for examination and licensure as a marriage and family therapist.

§801.112. General.

- (a) The board shall accept as meeting licensure requirements graduate work done at American universities which hold accreditation or candidacy status from accepted regional educational accrediting associations as reported by the American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers.
- (b) Degrees and coursework received at foreign universities shall be acceptable only if such coursework may be counted as transfer credit by accredited institutions. It is the applicant's responsibility to have degrees and coursework evaluated by a professional transcript evaluation service approved by the board.
- (c) The relevance to the licensing requirements of academic courses, the titles of which are not self-explanatory, must be substantiated through course descriptions in official school catalogs, bulletins, syllabi, or by other means.
- (d) The board shall count no undergraduate level courses taken by an applicant as meeting any academic requirements unless the applicant's official transcript clearly shows that the course was awarded graduate credit by the school.
- (e) The board shall accept no coursework which an applicant's transcript indicates was not completed with a passing grade or for credit.
- (f) In the case of coursework taken outside of a program of studies for which a degree was granted, no course in which the applicant received a grade below a "B" or "pass" shall be counted toward meeting academic requirements for examination or licensure.
- (g) In evaluating transcripts, the board shall consider a quarter hour of academic credit as two-thirds of a semester hour.

§801.113. Academic Requirements.

- (a) Persons applying for the examination must have completed or be enrolled in a marriage and family therapy graduate internship program, or its equivalent, approved by the Board.
- (b) Persons applying for licensure as a marriage and family therapist or a marriage and family therapist associate must have a master's or doctorate degree in marriage and family therapy or a master's or doctorate degree in a related mental health field with course work and training determined by the board to be substantially equivalent to a graduate degree in marriage and family therapy from a regionally accredited institution of higher education or an institution of higher education approved by the board.

- (c) A degree or course work in a related mental health field is substantially equivalent if it is at least 45 semester hours which the applicant completed at a regionally accredited school. The 45 semester hours may be course work taken in the required graduate degree program.
- (d) A degree or course work in a related mental health field must have been designed to train a person to provide direct services to assist individuals, families or couples in a therapeutic relationship in the resolution of cognitive, affective, behavioral or relational dysfunctions within the context of marriage or family systems.

§801.114. Academic Course Content. An applicant who holds a graduate degree in a mental health related field must have course work in each of the following areas (one course equals three semester hours):

- (1) theoretical foundations of marriage and family therapy -- one course;
- (2) assessment and treatment in marriage and family therapy -- four courses;
- (3) human development, gender, multicultural issues, and family studies – two courses;
- (4) psychopathology -- one course;
- (5) professional ethics -- one course;
- (6) applied professional research -- one course; and
- (7) supervised clinical practicum -- 12 months/nine hours.

SUBCHAPTER G. EXPERIENCE REQUIREMENTS FOR EXAMINATION AND LICENSURE

§801.141. Purpose. The purpose of this subchapter is to set out the experience requirements for examination and licensure as a marriage and family therapist.

§801.142. Supervised Clinical Experience Requirements and Conditions.

- (a) The applicant must have completed a minimum of two years of work experience in marriage and family therapy services that:
 - (1) includes at least 3,000 hours of clinical services to individuals, couples or families, of which at least 1,500 hours must be direct clinical services, 750 hours to couples or families, and the remaining 1,500 hours may come from related experiences that may include but not be limited to workshops, public

- relations, writing case notes, consulting with referral sources, etc; and
- (2) the applicant must be supervised in a manner acceptable to the board, including:
 - (A) at least 200 hours of supervision;
 - (B) of the 200 hours, at least 100 hours must be individual supervision;
 - (C) of the 200 hours, no more than 100 hours may be transferred from the graduate program;
 - (D) at least 50 hours of the post-graduate supervision must be individual supervision.
 - (b) An associate may practice marriage and family therapy in any established setting under supervision, such as a private practice, public or private agencies, hospitals, etc.
 - (c) During the period of supervised experience, an associate may be employed on a salary basis or be used within an established supervisory setting. The established settings must be structured with clearly defined job descriptions and areas of responsibility. The board may require that the applicant provide documentation of all work experience.
 - (d) During the post graduate supervision, both the supervisor and the associate may have disciplinary actions taken against their licenses for violations of the Act or rules.
 - (e) Supervision must be conducted under a supervision contract, which must be submitted to the board on the official form within 60 days of the initiation of supervision.
 - (f) Group supervised experience of an associate may count toward an associate's supervision requirement only if the supervision group consisted of a minimum of three and no more than six associates during the supervision hour.
 - (g) Individual supervised experience of an associate may count toward the associate's supervision requirement only if the supervision consisted of no more than two associates.
 - (h) The 200 hours of supervision must be face-to-face. The associate must receive a minimum of one hour of supervision every two weeks. A supervision hour is 45 minutes.
 - (i) An associate may have no more than two board-approved supervisors at a time, unless given prior approval by the board or its designee.
 - (j) The associate may receive credit for up to 500 clock hours toward the required 3,000 hours of supervised clinical services by providing services via telephonic or other electronic media, as approved by the supervisor.

§801.143. Supervisor Requirements.

- (a) Supervisors are recognized by the board when subsection (a) or (b) of this section is met by submitting an application which includes the following four documents;
 - (1) a license (which is not a provisional or an associate license) issued by the board or a license as a marriage and family therapist in another state or territory;
 - (2) a graduate degree in marriage and family therapy or a graduate degree in a related mental health field, such as counseling and guidance, psychology, psychiatry, and clinical social work, from an accredited 801.2 of this title (relating to Definitions); institution as defined in
 - (3) one of the following:
 - (A) successful completion of a one-semester graduate course in marriage and family therapy supervision from an accredited institution; or
 - (B) a 40 hour continuing education course in clinical supervision offered by a board approved provider; and
 - (4) at least 3,000 hours of direct client contact in the practice of marriage and family therapy over a minimum of three years as a licensed marriage and family therapist.
- (b) In lieu of meeting the qualifications set forth in subsection (a) of this section, a person is an acceptable supervisor if the person has been designated as an approved supervisor or supervisor-in-training by the American Association of Marriage and Family Therapy (AAMFT) before the person provides any supervision.
- (c) A supervisor may not be employed by the person whom he or she is supervising.
- (d) A supervisor may not be related within the second degree by affinity (marriage) or within the third degree by consanguinity (blood or adoption) to the person whom he or she is supervising.

SUBCHAPTER H. EXAMINATIONS

§801.171. Purpose. The purpose of this subchapter is to establish the rules governing the examinations for licensure.

§801.172. Frequency. The board, or its designee, shall administer licensure examinations at least semi-annually.

§801.173. Applying for Examination. A person must apply for the licensure examination in accordance with Subchapter F of this chapter (relating to Academic Requirements for Examination and Licensure) and §801.73 of this title (relating to Required Application Materials). The board shall notify an applicant of application approval or disapproval, and if disapproved, state the reason.

- (1) A person may apply to take the licensure examination after the person has submitted the necessary forms, fee and application in accordance with §801.73 of this title.
- (2) At least 60 days prior to the licensure examination, the executive director or the executive director's designee shall notify an applicant in writing that an application has been approved.
- (3) An applicant who wishes to take a scheduled examination must complete an examination registration form and return it to the board.

§801.174. Licensure and Jurisprudence Examinations.

- (a) The licensure examination shall be a written examination prescribed by the board which has been validated by an independent testing professional.
- (b) An applicant shall apply to take the licensure examination on a form prescribed by the board. The applicant will pay the examination fee at the examination site.
- (c) The board, or its designee, shall determine the times and places for licensing examinations and give reasonable public notice.
- (d) The board, or its designee, shall notify the examinee of the results of the licensure examination in accordance with the current examination contract or agreement. If the board is notified of a potential delay of notification of exam results, the board shall notify the examinee as soon as possible regarding the delay.
- (e) Procedures for failure of an applicant to pass a licensure examination are as follows:
 - (1) An applicant who fails an examination may retake the examination at the next scheduled date.
 - (2) Fee for the examination is in accordance with subsection (b) of this section.

- (3) The applicant must reschedule the examination and resubmit an application.
 - (4) The board shall furnish the person who failed the examination with an analysis of that person's performance on the examination if so requested in writing by the examinee.
- (f) If an applicant fails the licensure examination two or more times, the board may require the applicant to identify additional courses of study which address the area(s) of deficit; and present satisfactory evidence of completion of the courses before approving the applicant to reschedule the licensure examination.
 - (g) Effective September 1, 2006, all applicants for licensure must submit proof of successful completion of the jurisprudence examination at the time of application.
 - (h) The jurisprudence examination must have been completed no more than six months prior to the licensure application date.
 - (i) The jurisprudence examination is available as an online learning experience and applicable fees are payable directly to the approved vendor.
 - (j) The jurisprudence examination content is based on the Act, the rules of the board, and other state laws and rules that relate to the practice of marriage and family therapy.

SUBCHAPTER I. LICENSING

§801.201. General Licensing.

- (a) Upon receipt and approval of application documentation and required fees, the board shall issue the person a license containing a license number within 30 days.
- (b) The board will replace a lost, damaged, or destroyed license certificate upon a written request from the therapist and payment of the duplicate license fee. Requests must include a statement detailing the loss or destruction of the therapist's original license or be accompanied by the damaged certificate.
- (c) Upon the written request and payment of the license certificate duplicate fee by a licensee, the board will provide a licensee with a duplicate license within 30 days for a second place of practice which is designated in a licensee's file.

APPENDIX B

**Adapted* from Appendix A of
Guidelines for Parenting Coordination
Developed by the AFCC Task Force on Parenting Coordination
May 2005**

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR COMPREHENSIVE TRAINING OF PCS

A PC should have training in each of the following subject areas as reflected in the modules below. It is anticipated that mental health and legal professionals will have acquired some of the knowledge and experience in the competency areas listed, particularly in Section II, and in mediation training. Training programs may want to accommodate different levels of prior training and experience by offering training in these four modules and developing a process for exempting certain professionals from any of the modules where competency is established. Individual jurisdictions should set guidelines, approve trainings, and assign trainers to ensure that candidates can demonstrate minimum competencies in order to begin practice, and should require the completion of scheduled follow up trainings to achieve mastery within a reasonable amount of time. Individual jurisdictions and provinces might consider developing mentoring programs to provide consultation and support for beginning “PCs” to reinforce and develop the skills that are covered in the recommended subject areas.

Module 1: The Parenting Coordination Process

- A. The various functions of the PC
- B. Limitations of the parenting coordination process
 - ...
- C. Professional guidelines of practice for PCs
 - 1. The interplay between other professional guidelines and professional practice guidelines and local/state guidelines for court-appointed PCs
 - 2. The potential for conflict of interest of the PC and the people to whom parenting coordination services are offered
- D. Issues that are appropriate and not appropriate for parenting coordination
- E. Characteristics of individuals who are appropriate and not appropriate to participate in the parenting coordination process
 - 1. Appropriate courses of action when confronted with substance abuse during the parenting coordination process
 - 2. Screening for domestic violence and appropriate courses of action when confronted with domestic violence during the parenting coordination process
 - 3. The effect of domestic violence on parents involved in the parenting coordination process
 - 4. Situations in which the PC should suggest that the parties contact the supervising judicial officer, independent legal counsel, postpone or cancel the parenting coordination session, suspend the parenting

coordination process, or refer the parties to other resources

- F. When to refer parties to services for child protection or elder abuse, and the issue of confidentiality as it applies to each
- G. Special needs of the *pro se* or *pro per* party

Module 2: Family Dynamics in Separation and Divorce

- A. Psychological Issues in Separation and Divorce and Family Dynamics
 - 1. The impact divorce has on individuals and on family dynamics and the implications for the parenting coordination process
 - 2. Useful psychological research and theories applicable to the intervention for high conflict families
 - 3. How emotions impact on divorce issues and on a party’s ability to participate effectively in the parenting coordination process.
 - 4. Sources of divorce/separation impasses, including parental behaviors associated with personality disorders, and the related implications
 - 5. How to promote awareness by the parties of the interests of persons affected by actual or potential agreements, who are not represented during the parenting coordination process
 - a. The impact of grandparents, step-parents and significant others on family

- systems and the parenting coordination process
- b. Situations in which participation of non-parties (e.g., grandparents, children, new spouses) may be necessary in the parenting coordination process
- B. Issues concerning the needs of children in the context of divorce
 1. The needs and adjustment of children and the effect of divorce on their relationships with their mother, father, step-families, siblings and others in the family relationship
 2. Child(ren)'s developmental stages and how they relate to divorce and parenting arrangements
 3. The impact the parenting coordination process can have on the children's well-being and behavior
 4. When and how to involve children in the parenting coordination process
 5. Indicators of child abuse and/or neglect and the process and duty to report allegations of child abuse and/or neglect
- C. Dealing with high conflict parents
 1. The impact of parental conflict and appropriate parenting on children's well-being
 2. The dynamics of child alignments, estrangements and alienation
 3. Various parenting arrangements that consider the needs of the child(ren) and each parent's capacity to parent, including modifications for high conflict situations
- D. Dealing with domestic violence issues
 1. The different research-based types of domestic violence, including conflict-instigated violence, violence involving power, control, and coercion (often referred to as male battering), female violence, and separation-engendered violence
 2. The unique problems and inherent dangers presented by domestic violence of all types in terms of parental contacts, and the need for safe PC procedures and child exchanges
 3. The importance of monitoring compliance with the parenting plan...
 4. The psychological impact of domestic violence on child and adolescent development
- E. The different co-parenting relationships of cooperative, parallel, and conflicted parenting

Module 3: Parenting Coordination Techniques and Issues

- A. Structuring the parenting coordination process
 1. The initial session and preparing the parties for the process
 2. Scheduling the time and location, and establishing the format of each conference and focusing discussion
 3. Structuring and managing the discussion, maintaining control of the sessions, and utilizing appropriate case management skills
 4. Managing separate sessions, telephonic and e-mail communication
 5. Maintaining appropriate records and documentation as a PC
- B. The PC's informed consent, including limits on confidentiality
- C. The PC's service contract and fee allocation
- D. The role of the parenting plan in the parenting coordination process, including how to develop, monitor and modify a parenting plan
- E. The characteristics that enhance or undermine the effectiveness of the PC including, but not limited to: demonstrating empathy, building rapport, establishing trust, setting a cooperative tone, sympathetic listening and questioning, empowering the parties, remaining non-judgmental, language use, and non-verbal communication skills
- F. Awareness of personal biases, prejudices and styles that are the product of one's background and personal experiences that may affect the parenting coordination process
- G. Socio-economic, cultural, racial, ethnic, language, age, gender, religious, sexual orientation and disability issues, which may arise and/or affect the parties' negotiation styles, ability or willingness to engage in the parenting coordination process
- H. Building on partial agreements including when and how to switch between dispute resolution processes
- I. ...
- J. Appropriate techniques for handling difficult situations
- K. Appropriate boundaries of a PC
 1. Safety procedures for those participating in the parenting coordination process
 2. Office safety policies and working with clients having current restraining and protective orders
 3. Establishing appropriate limits for client demands
- L. When and how to use outside experts effectively
 1. How to assist the parties in deciding on

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2. appropriate community resources
 3. Developing a list of social service resources, including those for domestic violence situations
 - M. The impact of high conflict client behavior on the parenting coordination process and the PC and avoiding professional burn-out
 - N. Reasons for a PC to decline an appointment, withdraw or request appropriate assistance including, but not limited to, when the facts and circumstances of the case are beyond the PC's skill or experience
 - O. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requirements and strategies for handling situations when faced with disability issues or special needs
 - F. Forms utilized in local courts pertaining to parenting coordination and local court procedures
 - G. How to work with legal, mental health and other professional disciplines, and promote cooperation among those dealing with the family
 - H. When and how to utilize a qualified expert and/or a team approach to best serve the parties in the parenting coordination process
 - I. The grievance procedure contained in the local/state rules for PCs, if any
 - J. Possible ethical dilemmas that may confront a PC and how to avoid them
- * Portions of AFCC Guidelines not relevant to Texas law were removed.*

Module 4: Court Specific Parenting Coordination Procedures

- A. The PC's responsibility to the court
- B. Knowledge of and adherence to jurisdiction-specific qualifications for a PC
- C. Mentorship and certification requirements, if applicable
- D. Local/state/province family law as it may pertain to the parenting coordination process
 1. The state statute and/or rule governing family parenting coordination
 2. The difference between neutrality and impartiality as it applies to parenting coordination and the ability to demonstrate each appropriately
 3. Legal concepts as they relate to the parenting coordination process including, but not limited to: geographic relocation, equitable distribution, child support, law of modification, parenting time adjustment, law of relocation, law of due process, law of ex parte communication, and law of privilege
 4. The statutory constraints of parenting coordination where domestic violence exists and/or protective orders are in place
- E. How and when the PC should interface with the court system
 1. The appointment and discharge processes of the PC
 2. The importance of a court designation to the parenting coordination process
 3. The ethical constraints on confidentiality and both in relation to the entire parenting coordination process and separate sessions within the process

APPENDIX C

PC Credentials and Training (PCCAT) Portfolio

In order to market services and to verify to clients, attorneys, and judges what the qualifications of the LMFT-PC are, the following summary of core credentials is recommended.

TRAINING CRITERIA	VERIFICATION
Masters or Doctoral degree in Marriage & Family Therapy or a related mental health field	Copy of the diploma
3 years related professional post-degree experience	Resume including a list of references who know your work history
Current professional license/s	Copy of license/s
8 hours of family violence training	Copy of certificate
16-hour parenting coordination training	Copy of certificate
Continuing education related to parenting coordination	Summary of past 12 months CE activities
Mediation training [preferred]	Copy of certificate
Collaborative law training [if relevant]	Copy of certificate
Membership in TAMFT [recommended]	Verification

Recommendation to TAMFT Board: *A master list of PCs who meet the above criteria is recommended to be posted on the TAMFT website to facilitate referral sources, especially when multiple PCs are required to coordinate for families with substantial distance between the parents.*