

Why Your Custody Case Needs a Parenting Coordinator



3/19/2026

I. What is a Parenting Coordinator?

A Parenting Coordinator is a relatively new role meant to assist parents, lawyers and the Court in high conflict custody cases.

[New Jersey Court Rule 5:8D](#), was implemented on September 1, 2023, to govern the use of Parenting Coordinators in divorce and non-dissolution matters. Anytime the parents repeatedly disagree on what is in the best interest of their children, the case can benefit from appointment of a Parenting Coordinator.

In New York, PC involvement is based on local practice and court decisions rather than a statewide rule. Some districts, like the [8th Judicial District](#), have developed their own guidelines, however, these are not applicable for all of New York.

As the role of a Parenting Coordinator in both states is defined as a neutral third party to help parents implement parenting plans and resolve day-to-day issues, Parenting Coordinators cannot make recommendations on financial issues or modify legal and physical custody.

II. How to Have a Parenting Coordinator Appointed

A judge will appoint a Parenting Coordinator if parents have repeatedly litigated and struggle with communication. The Coordinator makes recommendations when parties disagree on parenting plan implementation or other day-to-day parenting issues.

The parties can also agree on the appointment of a Parenting Coordinator and submit a consent order to the court to name a Parenting Coordinator in their case.

III. How Does it Work?

Parenting Coordinators make binding recommendations on specific issues as outlined in the court rule, the court order, and the PCs retainer agreement, but not on financial matters or modifications to legal or physical custody.

A judge can appoint a Parenting Coordinator in divorce litigation, at any time, after a temporary or final custody order, as circumstances require.

The Parenting Coordinator is expected to make a recommendation to help resolve the conflict. After hearing both parents' goals and ideas, the Parenting Coordinator should issue binding recommendations on the issues, usually after helping parents try to find common ground.

IV. The Benefits of Appointing a Parenting Coordinator

Once a Parenting Coordinator is appointed, the parties take their unresolved issues to the PC after trying to resolve their issues themselves.

Parenting Coordinators continue to play an important role in supporting families as they manage complex custody arrangements and ongoing parenting disputes. The overall impact of parenting coordination remains clear: reducing conflict, streamlining dispute resolution, and promoting healthier co-parenting relationships for the best interest of children and benefit of families.

[Click Here to read the entire Winter 2026 Litigation Quarterly Advisor now!](#)

If you have any questions about this alert, please contact:

Lisa F. Chrystal, P.J.F.P. (Ret.), Counsel | 973.364.8359 | lchrystal@bracheichler.com

Judge Lisa F. Chrystal is a retired Superior Court Judge From New Jersey. Judge Chrystal served as a Judge for 22 years and as the Presiding Judge of the Family Division in Union County for eight years before her retirement in June 2022. She is Chair of the [Alternative Dispute Resolution Group](#) at [Brach Eichler](#) in Roseland, NJ where she serves as a mediator, arbitrator and Parenting Coordinator. Judge Chrystal is a Court Certified Parenting Coordinator in New Jersey.

Authors

The following attorneys contributed to this insight.



**Hon. Lisa F.
Chrystal, P.J.F.P. (Ret.)**

Counsel
Alternative Dispute Resolution,
Litigation

973-364-8359 · 973-618-5943 Fax

lchrystal@bracheichler.com