



Saskatchewan College of Psychologists

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Membership Advisory

Parenting Capacity Assessments/Custody and Access Assessments

Psychologists conducting *Parenting Capacity Assessments* or *Custody and Access Assessments* are reminded of the following expectations:

1. Work in this area of practice is to be conducted in a manner that is consistent with the direction provided by the Canadian Code of Ethics for Psychologists and the Saskatchewan College of Psychologists Professional Practice Guidelines, and best practice/evidence-based research.
2. A psychologist conducting assessments of the parenting capacity of Saskatchewan residents, and/or custody and access assessments of minors who are residents of the province must have Full Practice licensure with the Saskatchewan College of Psychologists (SCP) or be under the direct supervision of a Full Practice licensee of the SCP.
3. The psychologist must have the Authorized Practice Endorsement (APE) on their license, competency in forensic assessment in the particular area(s) of concern, as well as in the areas relevant to the specific population being served.;
4. Competency to conduct the assessments includes, but is not limited to knowledge of relevant Saskatchewan legislation in particular that pertaining to capacity to parent, and/or custody and access e.g. the Child & Family Services Act (CFSA) and the Mental Health Services Act (MHSA), Health Information Protection Act (HIPA);
5. A psychologist undertaking an assessment relating to legal considerations of parenting capacity and/or parental custody and access is expected to conduct the assessment with full and informed consideration of, and respect for the legal rights of the adult(s) and child(ren) who are the subjects of the assessment, as established by relevant legislation including but not limited to HIPA, the CFSA, and the MHSA .
6. A psychologist conducting such an assessment shall ensure that:
 - (a) the subjects of such assessments are fully informed of the purpose and process of the assessment, the cost of the assessment, how payment will be handled

including the issue of third party payment, the limits of confidentiality, the information to be included in the assessment report, how the information gathered will be used, who the assessment report will be given to, the potential that the psychologist may have to speak to their report in Court, and the right of subjects to refuse to participate in an assessment and the potential consequences should this be their choice;

- (b) discussion occurs with the subject(s) of the assessment, regarding the professional impartiality to be exercised by the psychologist in reporting the results of the assessment findings and the recommendations given in response to the findings and the referral questions;
 - (c) Congruent with best practice and the Canadian Code of Ethics for Psychologists, due diligence and reasonableness must be employed in seeking informed consent from the adult subject(s) and/or parents/legal guardians of minor subjects entitled to provide that consent. Ideally consent should be captured in a written, signed and dated format, and if possible witnessed by a responsible independent adult whose printed name and signature appear in the same document;
7. An assessment of capacity to parent, involving consideration of matters of custody and access shall be conducted, after full informed consent has been obtained. The assessment will be carried out by means of interviews, testing and clinical observation, and in keeping with relevant professional standards of practice (see 1,3,4, & 5, above);
 8. Due diligence shall be employed in the assessment of parenting capacity and/or custody and access, ensuring that those who are the subject of any evaluative statements and recommendations are included in the assessment. If this is not possible the limitations of the evaluative statements and recommendations must clearly be outlined within the report, as well as why the subject was not included in the assessment.
 9. The psychologist shall produce a written, signed report of the assessment undertaken, which documents all participant(s), component assessment procedures, the dates on which those occurred, the results and any professional considerations including limitations to the assessment and recommendations arising from those procedures and results.
 10. Distribution of the assessment report will be the responsibility of the psychologist, in accordance with the processes (see point 6, above) communicated to the person(s) who is/are the subject(s) of the assessment.
 11. The psychologist has the responsibility to appear, as requested or subpoenaed by a court of law in any relevant legal hearing, to speak to her/his report as agreed to through the informed consent process