

Creekside Psychology Ltd.

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Role of the Child Specialist

- Represents the child and maintains a clearly defined neutrality toward the parents
- Keeps the voice of the child directly in the forefront of the collaborative process
- Helps the child voice his/her feelings and worries about the divorce
- Assesses how the child is adapting (or not) to the divorce
- Is a "source of information" to the child
- Uses information to consult with the collaborative team
- Completes screening inventories
- Conducts telephone and face-to-face meetings with parents
- Liaisons with relevant sources (teachers, therapists, etc.)
- Considers where the child is developmentally
- Considers the temperament of the child
- Considers the child's relationship to all family members
- Looks at interest, attachments and support systems beyond the family
- Assesses what are the worries, fears, and concerns of the child
- Looks at current and future needs and risks to the child
- Shares professional knowledge about child development and the effects of divorce on children

What the Child Specialist Does

The choices and methods depend upon the age and needs of the child

- Conducts interviews with the parents (what are their concerns?)
- Interviews the child/children alone (what are their needs and wants?)
- Interviews significant others in the child's life, such as teachers, caregivers
- May interview the child with siblings
- Gives psychological inventories (BASC)
- Offers support and comfort to the child during a stressful time
- Provides a safe place for the child to tell his/her story about what is happening in the family
- Allows opportunities for the child to ask questions about family changes
- Provides relief for the child by bringing to the parents' attention the problems, worries, fears and hopes that may have gone undetected or unexpressed
- Helps the child identify personal strengths and accomplishments
- Helps the parents to become more aware of the needs and concerns of their child
- Provides important developmental and psychological, as well as practical information on how to best help children

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