

# **Superior Court of California, County of Merced**

## **Family Court Services**

The Superior Court of California, County of Merced, Family Court Services Department provides Child Custody Recommending Counseling (CCRC), (mediation) for families to assist in developing a parenting plan. The Court is currently scheduling the parents to be present remotely for Court ordered Child Custody Recommending Counseling on a specific date through video conference or telephone.

### **How do I attend CCRC?**

Do not report to Merced Superior Court for your upcoming appointment date for Child Custody Recommending Counseling. You need to make sure the Court has your current telephone number, email and mailing address on file. You will be contacted by the assigned Child Custody Recommending Counselor.

### **How do I update my contact information with the Court?**

If you need to update your telephone number, email, or mailing address with the Court, you must do so prior to your scheduled appointment. You can update this information by calling the Family Law Clerk's office at (209)725-4117.

### **How long will remote CCRC take?**

Although your paperwork says that your appointment is at 8:45am, you should plan to be available from 8:15am – 12pm. Multiple cases are scheduled for the same time so you may have to wait your turn.

### **Do I need to do anything before my CCRC appointment?**

There are 2 things you must do before your appointment.

1. Each parent shall watch the orientation to Child Custody Recommending Counseling; Orientation before your appointment date.

Please open hyperlink listed below to the Orientation to Family Court Mediation and Child Custody Recommending Counseling.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wJOcjP5RikQ>

2. Each parent shall complete and return the Confidential Information form for Child Custody Recommending Counseling that is listed below.



FCS FORM\_2.pdf



FCS FORM SPANISH  
(1).pdf

Each parent is responsible for printing out the form and mailing it to the following address: Superior Court of California, County of Merced, Family Law Division, 627 W. 21<sup>st</sup> Street, Merced CA, 95340. It is recommended that you do this at least **one (1) week before** your scheduled appointment to allow ample time for the form to be received by the Court.

### **How will remote CCRC work?**

The parents will receive a telephone call one (1) business day before your scheduled appointment. During this call, you will be provided a more specific time for your CCRC. You will also be provided with information as to how you will be contacted, either by email or by telephone. Please note that if by telephone, you may receive a call from a number that is PRIVATE or BLOCKED. CCRC staff will not be calling from our general telephone number.

On the day of the scheduled Child Custody Recommending Counseling appointment, each parent will be contacted by the assigned Child Custody Recommending Counselor via telephone between 8:15AM to 9:00AM to verify each parent's attendance by video conference or telephone.

### **What happens at the end of CCRC?**

When parents are able to reach an agreement, the Child Custody Recommending Counselor will prepare a written agreement and review it with both parents. The agreement will then be signed by the Judge and the agreement then becomes a Court Order. The Court Order will then be mailed to the parents.

When the parents are unable to reach an agreement the Child Custody Recommending Counselor will prepare a form called a Recommendation for a

proposed parenting plan. The Child Custody Recommending Counselor will also prepare a form called a Rationale that explains the reason the proposed parenting plan is recommended. The Recommendation and the Rationale will then be mailed to the parents. The recommendation from the CCRC will be considered by the Judge. The parents will be able to respond to the Recommendation. The Judge will then determine if the Recommendation will become a Court Order and/or modify the Recommendation.

### **Who do I call if I have questions?**

If you have any questions regarding the process for CCRC, please call the Family Law Clerk's Office (209)725-4117.

If you have questions regarding how to file your documents or how to serve the other party, please call the Self-Help Center at (209)725-4168 or by email at [selfhelp@mercedcourt.org](mailto:selfhelp@mercedcourt.org).

### **RULES FOR REMOTE CCRC**

1. Any recording of the video conference or telephone call of the Child Recommending proceeding is **strictly prohibited**, including, but not limited to copying or audio recording. **Violations may result in sanctions by the Court.**
2. Parents must appear for the video conference or telephone call in a private area with minimal background noise. You need to make sure everyone can hear you and you can hear everyone else.
3. No children or any third party is allowed to be present for the Child Custody Recommending Counseling. Only the parties involved shall be present. Family Court Services understands that schools are exercising distant learning and children may be in the residence. If possible, the parents should provide a caregiver to help assist with attending to children. It is in the best interest of children not to be exposed to conflict.

4. Parents are to be polite and follow the directions of the counselor. Obscenities and vulgar language will not be tolerated.
5. Any documents or evidence that you wish to present must be filed with the Court and served on the other parent **prior** to your scheduled appointment.

\*\*\* If you fail to follow these rules, the counselor will immediately terminate the counseling session and you will need to answer to the Judge. \*\*\*

### **Additional Online Resources**

Families Change: A guide to separation and divorce.

Website: <https://www.familieschange.ca.gov/>

Changeville: Helping children with parental divorce or separation.

Website: <https://www.familieschange.ca.gov/en/kids/changeville/>

Needs of Children of Different Ages: Provides help in developing a parenting plan for children of different ages.

Website: <https://www.courts.ca.gov/16238.htm?rdeLocaleAttr=en>

Domestic Violence and Children: If there has been Domestic violence in your family, here is important information about a law that may apply.

[www.courts.ca.gov/documents/3044sheetEN.pdf](http://www.courts.ca.gov/documents/3044sheetEN.pdf) - 2019-05-08

Child Custody Recommending Counseling Information Sheet is listed below:

Child Custody Information Sheet Recommending Counseling ([Form FL-313-INFO](#) ). Read this form if your case is in a county where there is "child custody recommending counseling." This information sheet is also available in [Spanish](#) , [Chinese](#) , [Korean](#) , [Vietnamese](#)  and [Tagalog](#) 