MINNESOTA
JUDICIAL BRANCH
Tenth Judicial District

How to Prepare for your Social Early Neutral Evaluation (SENE)

Your SENE evaluators will be helping you consider how to resolve the custody and parenting time issues in your divorce or custody case. To ensure that your SENE session is as productive as possible:

1) **Bring a picture of your child/children to the SENE session.** The evaluators will want to get an idea of who your children are to help them understand your family's needs.

2) **Prepare to tell your "story."** The evaluators will ask you to tell them about your family and describe what you believe would be the best outcome for your children's custody and parenting time. There is no right or wrong way to do this, but here are a few topic areas you should be prepared to talk about:

- **Family Background:**
  - Your relationship with the other party: How and when did you meet? What first drew you to the other party? When and why did the relationship end?
  - Current living arrangements: Where do you live? With whom? Where do the kids sleep if they are there? How are the kids doing at your house?
  - Work: Where do you work? What is your typical work schedule? Do you have flexibility in your schedule?

- **Your Children:**
  - Their personalities
  - Day-to-day routines (bedtimes, naps, meals, etc.)
  - Daycare/school schedules and locations
  - Other activities (sports, extracurriculars)
  - Religion
  - Child care arrangements
  - Any special needs

- **Your Goals:**
  - What are you proposing for a parenting time schedule? It can be helpful to have your schedule in writing, including specific days and times.
  - What are you proposing for parenting time over school breaks and holidays?
  - Do you agree with joint legal custody? If not, what are your reasons?
  - What are you proposing for physical custody (who makes daily decisions about your children)?
  - Why is your proposal important to you?
  - Why is your proposal best for the children?
  - If you know the other party's proposal and disagree, what doesn't work regarding that proposal, and why?
  - What good parenting skills does the other parent have?
  - What good parenting skills do you have?
  - How does your proposal help the children get enough time with each parent?

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How to Prepare for your Financial Early Neutral Evaluation (FENE)

Your FENE evaluator will be helping you consider how to resolve the financial aspects of your divorce. To ensure that your FENE session is as productive as possible:

1) **Gather documentation of your finances, including the following documents and any other documentation requested by your FENE evaluator:**
   - Last two years' tax returns
   - Recent pay stubs or other documentation of income
   - Documents (such as property tax valuation) showing the value of any real estate owned
   - Documents showing the value of any other property owned, such as stocks, bonds, life insurance policies, and vehicles
   - Recent statements showing current balances for your bank accounts and retirement accounts
   - Documents showing total balances and monthly payments owed for debts
   - A chart listing all of your assets and debts and their current balances/values
   - A chart listing your estimated monthly living expenses
   - If personal property has not been divided, a list of property items you would like.
   - If you are claiming any property is non-marital, proof of the non-marital claim.
   - If you are claiming the other party has spent money or reduced the value of any assets and you do not believe you should be responsible for that expense or value reduction, provide evidence of the expenditures, transfers of money, etcetera and be prepared to explain why the expense or value reduction should not be shared between the parties
   - Documents filed with the court (pleadings) and any court orders in your case so far.

2) **Prepare your settlement proposal:**
   - Dividing Assets and Debt
     - Who should end up with which property/assets?
     - Who should be responsible for which debts?
     - Why is your proposal for division of property and debt fair and equitable?
   - Spousal Maintenance
     - Are you able to afford your reasonable monthly expenses?
     - If not, how much spousal maintenance are you asking the other party to pay, and for how long?
   - Child Support
     - Which party will provide medical and dental insurance for the children?
     - Which party will pay for childcare for the children?
     - What does the Minnesota Child Support Calculator say you each owe for child support?
     - Are you proposing a different amount of child support? If so, why?
     - How will you divide uninsured/unreimbursed medical expenses for the children?
     - Are there any other expenses for the children (fees and equipment for extracurriculars, clothing, etc.) that you wish to decide how to divide?

3) **Provide your proposal to the evaluator.** Try to put your proposal in writing and send your proposal, along with the documents above, to your evaluator and the other party or their attorney, as long before the FENE session as possible.