Information for Parents and Lawyers

What is a Voice of the Child Report (VCR)?

A Voice of the Child Report is a non-evaluative report prepared for parents and/or the Court after meeting with the child(ren) of parents who have separated or divorced. The purpose of a VCR is to assist in the resolution of parenting arrangements by bringing forward the child's views, perspectives, and preferences for consideration in negotiation, mediation, litigation, or other dispute resolution processes.

A VCR may be requested by a parent or legal guardian, a lawyer, or ordered by the Court at any stage of the dispute resolution or litigation process. However, the completion of a VCR remains at the discretion of the VCR Practitioner.

Voice of the Child Reports offered through Journey Forward Counselling are available for children **12 years of age and older**, provided the child is willing to participate and **both** parents or legal guardians consent.

VCRs assist parents in gaining insight into their child's experience of the separation and parenting arrangements. They are intended to help parents better understand what matters most to their child and to support informed decision-making in the child's best interests.

VCRs are limited in scope and are not parenting assessments. They do not involve an evaluation of either parent's parenting abilities, strengths, or limitations, nor do they result in recommendations regarding parenting arrangements.

VCRs can be particularly helpful in the early stages of separation, as they may assist parents in developing parenting arrangements that reduce conflict and promote stability for the child. Even when parenting arrangements change over time, early attention to the child's views often supports improved outcomes and emotional well-being.

VCRs are generally most appropriate where there are no complex clinical issues, such as significant mental health concerns, active addictions, or allegations of abuse. Where such issues are present, a more comprehensive parenting assessment or clinical intervention may be more appropriate.

Most parents value hearing their child's perspective and recognize the importance of ensuring their child's voice is heard, without placing the child in a decision-making role. A VCR provides children with an opportunity to express their views in a developmentally appropriate and emotionally safe manner, without being asked to choose between parents.

When is a VCR not completed?

A Voice of the Child Report is typically not completed under the following circumstances:

- When there are criminal charges involving a parent and the child may be required to testify, when bail or court conditions prohibit contact, or where other legal restrictions apply.
- When there is a recently completed parenting assessment or report prepared under **section 13-8 of *The King's Bench Act, 2023 (Saskatchewan)***.
- When participation may place the child at emotional or psychological risk.
- When the child is under the age of 12.

Confidentiality and Scope

Meetings with the child are conducted in a confidential setting. The VCR Practitioner allows the child to determine what information they are comfortable sharing with parents and what information is not to be shared. This approach supports emotional safety and encourages honest and open communication.

The Voice of the Child Report is not a confidential therapeutic record and may be disclosed to the Court if ordered.

VCRs are limited in scope and do not constitute an assessment of any kind. No collateral information is gathered, and no recommendations are made.

As with any work involving children, disclosures related to safety or potential risk must be reported to child protection authorities in accordance with applicable legislation.

What to expect?

The VCR Practitioner will determine, in consultation with each parent, the location and scheduling of all meetings. A minimum of two in-person meetings will be held with each child. Each parent is responsible for ensuring the child attends one meeting. The VCR Practitioner will determine the location and scheduling of the meetings in consultation with each parent. If in-person meetings cannot be arranged, the Practitioner may be unable to complete the report.

Parents or guardians may remain in the waiting area during the child's session.

What to tell the child about it?

Parents are encouraged to keep explanations simple and neutral. The following guidance may be helpful:

- Do not coach, influence, or pressure the child regarding what to say.
- Avoid discussing the other parent or desired outcomes.
- Reassure the child that they are not being asked to choose between parents.

Suggested language may include:

"We thought it might be helpful for you to meet with someone who talks with kids when parents separate. They want to hear your thoughts and feelings so they can help the adults make better decisions."

"You won't be asked to choose between us."

"You can share what you want, and only what you are comfortable sharing will be passed on."

After the meetings with the child?

Parents should not question the child about what was discussed during the meetings.

The VCR Practitioner will prepare a written Voice of the Child Report. The report will include only the information the child has agreed to share and may include basic factual information, observations, and information regarding the child's ability to express their views.

If, at any point, sharing information is determined to be detrimental to the child's well-being, the process may be paused or terminated.

Professional Fees

- **Base Fee for Voice of the Child Report:** $2,250
- **Additional Child (sibling):** $750 per child
- **Non-refundable deposit:** $1,000 (required to begin the process)
- **Remaining balance:** Due upon completion of the report and prior to release

The base fee reflects the standard scope of the Voice of the Child Report, including child interviews, preparation, and report writing.

Total fees typically exceed the base fee, depending on the number of children involved and the time required to complete the report.

Most reports fall within the following estimated ranges:

- **One child:** approximately $2,250–$2,700
- **Multiple children:** approximately $2,600–$3,500+

Full details regarding fees and billing are outlined in the **Letter of Understanding and Informed Consent**, which is provided prior to the commencement of services.

If you have any questions, please contact by phone: 306-550-4118 or by email: melanie@journeyforwardcounselling.ca