Florida Family Law: Ch.

Domestic Relations fall under Title 43 of the Florida Statutes

Chapter 742.011 Determination of Parentage Proceedings; jurisdiction-Any woman who is pregnant or has a child, any man who has reason to believe that he is the father of a child, or any child may bring proceedings in the circuit court, in chancery, to determine the paternity of the child when paternity has not been established by law or otherwise.

(There are five ways to establish paternity:

- Marriage: if the mother and father are married at the time of the child's birth
- Acknowledgement of paternity: an unmarried couple signs a legal document when the child is born
- Genetic testing
- Court order: A petition to determine paternity can be filed by the mother or father of a child. Usually, paternity is requested in order to demand support or determine visitation.
- Legitimation: the mother and natural father get married to each other after the child is born and update the birth record)

742.08 Default of support payments.—Upon default in payment of any moneys ordered by the court to be paid, the court may enter a judgment for the amount in default, plus interest, administrative costs, filing fees, and other expenses incurred by the clerk of the circuit court which shall be a lien upon all property of the defendant both real and personal. Costs and fees shall be assessed only after the court makes a determination of the nonprevailing party's ability to pay such costs and fees. In Title IV-D cases, any costs, including filing fees, recording fees, mediation costs, service of process fees, and other expenses incurred by the clerk of the circuit court, shall be assessed only against the nonprevailing obligor after the court makes a determination of the nonprevailing obligor's ability to pay such costs and fees. The Department of Revenue shall not be considered a party for purposes of this section; however, fees may be assessed against the department pursuant to s. 57.105(1). Willful failure to comply with an order of the court shall be deemed a contempt of the court entering the order and shall be punished as such. The court may require bond of the defendant for the faithful performance of his or her obligation under the order of the court in such amount and upon such conditions as the court shall direct.

(Child support is based on the income of both parents. Other financial matters, such as the debts or other obligations of the parents generally do not come into play. The State of Florida takes the payment of child support very seriously.

Therefore, the State may choose to suspend your driver's license, seize federal tax refunds, lottery winnings, and unemployment compensation, place a lien on property, or even issue an arrest warrant.)

742.18 Disestablishment of paternity:

(1) This section establishes circumstances under which a male may disestablish paternity or terminate a child support obligation when the male is not the biological father of the child. To disestablish paternity or terminate a child support obligation, the male must file a petition in the circuit court having jurisdiction over the child support obligation. The petition must be served on the mother or other legal guardian or custodian of the child. If the child support obligation was determined administratively and has not been ratified by a court, then the petition must be filed in the circuit court where the mother or legal guardian or custodian resides. Such a petition must be served on the Department of Revenue and on the mother or legal guardian or custodian. If the mother or legal guardian or custodian no longer resides in the state, the petition may be filed in the circuit court in the county where the petitioner resides. [entire Statute available at the Official Internet Site of the Florida Legislature]

744.102 Guardianship, definitions:

(9) "Guardian" means a person who has been appointed by the court to act on behalf of a ward's person or property, or both.

(a) "Limited guardian" means a guardian who has been appointed by the court to exercise the legal rights and powers specifically designated by court order entered after the court has found that the ward lacks the capacity to do some, but not all, of the tasks necessary to care for his or her person or property, or after the person has voluntarily petitioned for appointment of a limited guardian.

(b) "Plenary guardian" means a person who has been appointed by the court to exercise all delegable legal rights and powers of the ward after the court has found that the ward lacks the capacity to perform all of the tasks necessary to care for his or her person or property.

(10) "Guardian ad litem" means a person who is appointed by the court having jurisdiction of the guardianship or a court in which a particular legal matter is pending to represent a ward in that proceeding.

(11) "Guardian advocate" means a person appointed by a written order of the court to represent a person with developmental disabilities under s. 393.12. As used in this chapter, the term does not apply to a guardian advocate appointed for a person determined incompetent to consent to treatment under s. 394.4598.

(12) "Incapacitated person" means a person who has been judicially determined to lack the capacity to manage at least some of the property or to meet at least some of the essential health and safety requirements of the person.

744.3045 Preneed Guardain:

(1) A competent adult may name a preneed guardian by making a written declaration that names such guardian to serve in the event of the declarant's incapacity.
(2)The written declaration must reasonably identify the declarant and preneed guardian and be signed by the declarant in the presence of at least two attesting witnesses present at the same time.
(3)The declarant may file the declaration with the clerk of the court. When a petition for incapacity is filed, the clerk shall produce the declaration
(4)Production of the declaration in a proceeding for incapacity shall constitute a rebuttable presumption that the preneed guardian is entitled to serve as guardian. The court shall not be bound to appoint the preneed guardian if the preneed guardian is found to be unqualified to serve as guardian. (5)The preneed guardian shall assume the duties of guardian immediately upon an adjudication of incapacity. (6)If the preneed guardian refuses to serve, a written declaration appointing an alternate preneed guardian constitutes a rebuttable presumption that such preneed guardian is entitled to serve as guardian. The court is not bound to appoint the alternate preneed guardian if the alternate preneed guardian is found to be unqualified to serve as guardian. (7)Within 20 days after assumption of duties as guardian, a preneed guardian shall petition for confirmation of appointment. If the court finds the preneed guardian to be qualified to serve as guardian pursuant to ss. 744.309 and 744.312, appointment of the guardian must be confirmed. Each guardian so confirmed shall file an oath in accordance with s. 744.347 and shall file a bond, if required. Letters of guardianship must then be issued in the manner provided in s. 744.345.

(The declaration of pre-need guardian is a written document where you state your preference for a guardian for both you and your property in case you become incompetent to manage your own affairs.)

744.3201 Petition to determine incapacity.—

(1) A petition to determine incapacity of a person may be executed by an adult person.
(2) The petition must be verified and must:
(a) State the name, age, and present address of the petitioner and his or her relationship to the alleged incapacitated person;
(b) State the name, age, county of residence, and present address of the alleged incapacitated person;
(c) Specify the primary language spoken by the alleged incapacitated person, if known;
(d) Allege that the petitioner believes the alleged incapacitated person to be incapacitated and specify the factual information on which such belief is based and the names and addresses of all persons known to the petitioner who have knowledge of such facts through personal observations;
(e) State the name and address of the alleged incapacitated person's attending or family physician, if known;
(f) State which rights enumerated in s. 744.3215 the alleged incapacitated person is incapable of exercising, to the best of petitioner's knowledge. If the petitioner has insufficient experience to make such judgments, the petition must so state; and

(g) State the names, relationships, and addresses of the next of kin of the alleged incapacitated person, so far as are known, specifying the dates of birth of any who are minors.

(3) A copy of any petition for appointment of guardian or emergency temporary guardian, if applicable, shall be filed with the petition to determine incapacity.

751 Temporary Custody of Minor Children by Extended Family

751.01 Purpose of act.—The purposes of this chapter are to:

(1) Recognize that many minor children in this state live with and are well cared for by members of their extended families. The parents of these children have often provided for their care by placing them temporarily with another family member who is better able to care for them. Because of the care being provided the children by their extended families, they are not dependent children.

(2) Provide for the welfare of a minor child who is living with extended family members. At present, such family members are unable to give complete care to the child in their custody because they lack a legal document that explains and defines their relationship to the child, and they are unable effectively to consent to the care of the child by third parties.

(3) Provide temporary or concurrent custody of a minor child to a family member having physical custody of the minor child to enable the custodian to:

(a) Consent to all necessary and reasonable medical and dental care for the child, including nonemergency surgery and psychiatric care.

(b) Secure copies of the child's records, held by third parties, that are necessary for the care of the child, including, but not limited to:

1. Medical, dental, and psychiatric records.
2. Birth certificates and other records.
3. Educational records.

(c) Enroll the child in school and grant or withhold consent for a child to be tested or placed in special school programs, including exceptional education.

(d) Do all other things necessary for the care of the child.

752 Grandparental Visitation Rights

752.01 Action by grandparent for right of visitation; when petition shall be granted-

(1) The court shall, upon petition filed by a grandparent of a minor child, award reasonable rights of visitation to the grandparent with respect to the child when it is in the best interest of the minor child if:

(a) The marriage of the parents of the child is dissolved;

(b) A parent of the child has deserted the child; or

(c) The minor child was born out of wedlock and not later determined to be a child born within wedlock as provided in s. 742.091.

(2) In determining the best interest of the minor child, the court shall consider:

(a) The willingness of the grandparent or grandparents to encourage a close relationship between the child and the parent or parents.

(b) The length and quality of the prior relationship between the child and the grandparent or grandparents.

(c) The preference of the child if the child is determined to be of sufficient maturity to express a preference.

(d) The mental and physical health of the child.

(e) The mental and physical health of the grandparent or grandparents.

(f) Such other factors as are necessary in the particular circumstances.

(3) This act does not provide for grandparental visitation rights for children placed for adoption under chapter 63 except as provided in s. 752.07 with respect to adoption by a stepparent.

Dissolution of Marriage; Support; Time-Sharing falls under Title VI of the Florida Statutes

61.043 Commencement of a proceeding for dissolution of marriage or for alimony and child support; dissolution questionnaire.—

(1) A proceeding for dissolution of marriage or a proceeding under s. 61.09 shall be commenced by filing in the circuit court a petition entitled "In re the marriage of , husband, and , wife." A copy of the petition together with a copy of a summons shall be served upon the other party to the marriage in the same manner as service of papers in civil actions generally.

(2) Upon filing for dissolution of marriage, the petitioner must complete and file with the clerk of the circuit court an unsigned anonymous informational questionnaire. For purposes of anonymity, completed questionnaires must be kept in a separate file for later distribution by the clerk to researchers from the Florida State University Center for Marriage and Family. These questionnaires must be made available to researchers from the Florida State University Center for Marriage and Family at their request. The actual questionnaire shall be formulated by researchers from Florida State University who shall distribute them to the clerk of the circuit court in each county.

61.071 Alimony pendente lite; suit money.—In every proceeding for dissolution of the marriage, a party may claim alimony and suit money in the petition or by motion, and if the petition is well founded, the court shall allow a reasonable sum therefor. If a party in any proceeding for dissolution of marriage claims alimony or suit money in his or her answer or by motion, and the answer or motion is well founded, the court shall allow a reasonable sum therefor.

61.075 Equitable distribution of marital assets and liabilities.—

(1) In a proceeding for dissolution of marriage, in addition to all other remedies available to a court to do equity between the parties, or in a proceeding for disposition of assets following a dissolution of marriage by a court which lacked jurisdiction over the absent spouse or lacked

jurisdiction to dispose of the assets, the court shall set apart to each spouse that spouse's nonmarital assets and liabilities, and in distributing the marital assets and liabilities between the parties, the court must begin with the premise that the distribution should be equal, unless there is a justification for an unequal distribution based on all relevant factors, including:

(a) The contribution to the marriage by each spouse, including contributions to the care and education of the children and services as homemaker.

(b) The economic circumstances of the parties.

(c) The duration of the marriage.

(d) Any interruption of personal careers or educational opportunities of either party.

(e) The contribution of one spouse to the personal career or educational opportunity of the other spouse.

(f) The desirability of retaining any asset, including an interest in a business, corporation, or professional practice, intact and free from any claim or interference by the other party.

(g) The contribution of each spouse to the acquisition, enhancement, and production of income or the improvement of, or the incurring of liabilities to, both the marital assets and the nonmarital assets of the parties.

(h) The desirability of retaining the marital home as a residence for any dependent child of the marriage, or any other party, when it would be equitable to do so, it is in the best interest of the child or that party, and it is financially feasible for the parties to maintain the residence until the child is emancipated or until exclusive possession is otherwise terminated by a court of competent jurisdiction. In making this determination, the court shall first determine if it would be in the best interest of the dependent child to remain in the marital home; and, if not, whether other equities would be served by giving any other party exclusive use and possession of the marital home.

(i) The intentional dissipation, waste, depletion, or destruction of marital assets after the filing of the petition or within 2 years prior to the filing of the petition.

(j) Any other factors necessary to do equity and justice between the parties.

(2) If the court awards a cash payment for the purpose of equitable distribution of marital assets, to be paid in full or in installments, the full amount ordered shall vest when the judgment is awarded and the award shall not terminate upon remarriage or death of either party, unless otherwise agreed to by the parties, but shall be treated as a debt owed from the obligor or the obligor's estate to the obligee or the obligee's estate, unless otherwise agreed to by the parties.

(3) In any contested dissolution action wherein a stipulation and agreement has not been entered and filed, any distribution of marital assets or marital liabilities shall be supported by factual findings in the judgment or order based on competent substantial evidence with reference to the factors enumerated in subsection (1). The distribution of all marital assets and marital liabilities, whether equal or unequal, shall include specific written findings of fact as to the following:

(a) Clear identification of nonmarital assets and ownership interests;

(b) Identification of marital assets, including the individual valuation of significant assets, and designation of which spouse shall be entitled to each asset;

(c) Identification of the marital liabilities and designation of which spouse shall be responsible for each liability;

(d) Any other findings necessary to advise the parties or the reviewing court of the trial court's rationale for the distribution of marital assets and allocation of liabilities.

(4) The judgment distributing assets shall have the effect of a duly executed instrument of conveyance, transfer, release, or acquisition which is recorded in the county where the property is located when the judgment, or a certified copy of the judgment, is recorded in the official records of the county in which the property is located.

(5) If the court finds good cause that there should be an interim partial distribution during the pendency of a dissolution action, the court may enter an interim order that shall identify and value the marital and nonmarital assets and liabilities made the subject of the sworn motion, set apart those nonmarital assets and liabilities, and provide for a partial distribution of those marital assets and liabilities. An interim order may be entered at any time after the date the dissolution of marriage is filed and served and before the final distribution of marital and nonmarital assets and marital and nonmarital liabilities.

(a) Such an interim order shall be entered only upon good cause shown and upon sworn motion establishing specific factual basis for the motion. The motion may be filed by either party and shall demonstrate good cause why the matter should not be deferred until the final hearing.

(b) The court shall specifically take into account and give appropriate credit for any partial distribution of marital assets or liabilities in its final allocation of marital assets or liabilities. Further, the court shall make specific findings in any interim order under this section that any partial distribution will not cause inequity or prejudice to either party as to either party's claims for support or attorney's fees.

(c) Any interim order partially distributing marital assets or liabilities as provided in this subsection shall be pursuant to and comport with the factors in subsections (1) and

(3) as such factors pertain to the assets or liabilities made the subject of the sworn motion.

(d) As used in this subsection, the term "good cause" means extraordinary circumstances that require an interim partial distribution.

(6) As used in this section:

(a)1. "Marital assets and liabilities" include:

a. Assets acquired and liabilities incurred during the marriage, individually by either spouse or jointly by them.

b. The enhancement in value and appreciation of nonmarital assets resulting either from the efforts of either party during the marriage or from the contribution to or expenditure thereon of marital funds or other forms of marital assets, or both.

c. Interspousal gifts during the marriage.

d. All vested and nonvested benefits, rights, and funds accrued during the marriage in retirement, pension, profit-sharing, annuity, deferred compensation, and insurance plans and programs.

2. All real property held by the parties as tenants by the entireties, whether acquired prior to or during the marriage, shall be presumed to be a marital asset. If, in any case, a party makes a claim to the contrary, the burden of proof shall be on the party asserting the claim that the subject property, or some portion thereof, is nonmarital.

3. All personal property titled jointly by the parties as tenants by the entireties, whether acquired prior to or during the marriage, shall be presumed to be a marital asset. In the event a party makes a claim to the contrary, the burden of proof shall be on the party asserting the claim that the subject property, or some portion thereof, is nonmarital.

4. The burden of proof to overcome the gift presumption shall be by clear and convincing evidence.

(b) "Nonmarital assets and liabilities" include:

1. Assets acquired and liabilities incurred by either party prior to the marriage, and assets acquired and liabilities incurred in exchange for such assets and liabilities;

2. Assets acquired separately by either party by noninterspousal gift, bequest, devise, or descent, and assets acquired in exchange for such assets;

3. All income derived from nonmarital assets during the marriage unless the income was treated, used, or relied upon by the parties as a marital asset;

4. Assets and liabilities excluded from marital assets and liabilities by valid written agreement of the parties, and assets acquired and liabilities incurred in exchange for such assets and liabilities; and

5. Any liability incurred by forgery or unauthorized signature of one spouse signing the name of the other spouse. Any such liability shall be a nonmarital liability only of the party having committed the forgery or having affixed the unauthorized signature. In determining an award of attorney's fees and costs pursuant to s. 61.16, the court may consider forgery or an unauthorized signature by a party and may make a separate award for attorney's fees and costs occasioned by the forgery or unauthorized signature. This subparagraph does not apply to any forged or unauthorized signature that was subsequently ratified by the other spouse.

(7) The cut-off date for determining assets and liabilities to be identified or classified as marital assets and liabilities is the earliest of the date the parties enter into a valid separation agreement, such other date as may be expressly established by such agreement, or the date of the filing of a petition for dissolution of marriage. The date for determining value of assets and the amount of liabilities identified or classified as marital is the date or dates as the judge determines is just and equitable under the circumstances. Different assets may be valued as of different dates, as, in the judge's discretion, the circumstances require.

(8) All assets acquired and liabilities incurred by either spouse subsequent to the date of the marriage and not specifically established as nonmarital assets or liabilities are presumed to be marital assets and liabilities. Such presumption is overcome by a showing that the assets and liabilities are nonmarital assets and liabilities. The presumption is only for evidentiary purposes in the dissolution proceeding and does not vest title. Title to disputed assets shall vest only by the judgment of a court. This section does not require the joinder of spouses in the conveyance, transfer, or hypothecation of a spouse's individual property; affect the laws of descent and distribution; or establish community property in this state.

(9) The court may provide for equitable distribution of the marital assets and liabilities without regard to alimony for either party. After the determination of an equitable distribution of the marital assets and liabilities, the court shall consider whether a judgment for alimony shall be made.

(10) To do equity between the parties, the court may, in lieu of or to supplement, facilitate, or effectuate the equitable division of marital assets and liabilities, order a monetary payment in a lump sum or in installments paid over a fixed period of time.

(11) Special equity is abolished. All claims formerly identified as special equity, and all special equity calculations, are abolished and shall be asserted either as a claim for unequal distribution of marital property and resolved by the factors set forth in subsection (1) or as a claim of enhancement in value or appreciation of nonmarital property.

61.076 Distribution of retirement plans upon dissolution of marriage.—

(1) All vested and nonvested benefits, rights, and funds accrued during the marriage in retirement, pension, profit-sharing, annuity, deferred compensation, and insurance plans and programs are marital assets subject to equitable distribution.

(2) If the parties were married for at least 10 years, during which at least one of the parties who was a member of the federal uniformed services performed at least 10 years of creditable service, and if the division of marital property includes a division of uniformed services retired or retainer pay, the final judgment shall include the following:

(a) Sufficient information to identify the member of the uniformed services;

(b) Certification that the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act was observed if the decree was issued while the member was on active duty and was not represented in court;

(c) A specification of the amount of retired or retainer pay to be distributed pursuant to the order, expressed in dollars or as a percentage of the disposable retired or retainer pay.

(3) An order which provides for distribution of retired or retainer pay from the federal uniformed services shall not provide for payment from this source more frequently than monthly and shall not require the payor to vary normal pay and disbursement cycles for retired or retainer pay in order to comply with the order.

61.077 Determination of entitlement to setoffs or credits upon sale of marital home.—A party is not entitled to any credits or setoffs upon the sale of the marital home unless the parties' settlement agreement, final judgment of dissolution of marriage, or final judgment equitably distributing assets or debts specifically provides that certain credits or setoffs are allowed or given at the time of the sale. In the absence of a settlement agreement involving the marital home, the court shall consider the following factors before determining the issue of credits or setoffs in its final judgment:

(1) Whether exclusive use and possession of the marital home is being awarded, and the basis for the award;

(2) Whether alimony is being awarded to the party in possession and whether the alimony is being awarded to cover, in part or otherwise, the mortgage and taxes and other expenses of and in connection with the marital home;

(3) Whether child support is being awarded to the party in possession and whether the child support is being awarded to cover, in part or otherwise, the mortgage and taxes and other expenses of and in connection with the marital home;

(4) The value to the party in possession of the use and occupancy of the marital home;

(5) The value of the loss of use and occupancy of the marital home to the party out of possession;

(6) Which party will be entitled to claim the mortgage interest payments, real property tax payments, and related payments in connection with the marital home as tax deductions for federal income tax purposes;

(7) Whether one or both parties will experience a capital gains taxable event as a result of the sale of the marital home; and

(8) Any other factor necessary to bring about equity and justice between the parties.

61.08 Alimony.—

(1) In a proceeding for dissolution of marriage, the court may grant alimony to either party, which alimony may be bridge-the-gap, rehabilitative, durational, or permanent in nature or any combination of these forms of alimony. In any award of alimony, the court may order periodic payments or payments in lump sum or both. The court may consider the adultery of either spouse and the circumstances thereof in determining the amount of alimony, if any, to be awarded. In all dissolution actions, the court shall include findings of fact relative to the factors enumerated in subsection (2) supporting an award or denial of alimony.

(2) In determining whether to award alimony or maintenance, the court shall first make a specific factual determination as to whether either party has an actual need for alimony or maintenance and whether either party has the ability to pay alimony or maintenance. If the court finds that a party has a need for alimony or maintenance and that the other party has the ability to pay alimony or maintenance, then in determining the proper type and amount of alimony or maintenance under subsections (5)-(8), the court shall consider all relevant factors, including, but not limited to:

(a) The standard of living established during the marriage.

(b) The duration of the marriage.

(c) The age and the physical and emotional condition of each party.

(d) The financial resources of each party, including the nonmarital and the marital assets and liabilities distributed to each.

(e) The earning capacities, educational levels, vocational skills, and employability of the parties and, when applicable, the time necessary for either party to acquire sufficient education or training to enable such party to find appropriate employment.

(f) The contribution of each party to the marriage, including, but not limited to, services rendered in homemaking, child care, education, and career building of the other party.

(g) The responsibilities each party will have with regard to any minor children they have in common.

(h) The tax treatment and consequences to both parties of any alimony award, including the designation of all or a portion of the payment as a nontaxable, nondeductible payment.

(i) All sources of income available to either party, including income available to either party through investments of any asset held by that party.

(j) Any other factor necessary to do equity and justice between the parties.

(3) To the extent necessary to protect an award of alimony, the court may order any party who is ordered to pay alimony to purchase or maintain a life insurance policy or a bond, or to otherwise secure such alimony award with any other assets which may be suitable for that purpose.

(4) For purposes of determining alimony, there is a rebuttable presumption that a short-term marriage is a marriage having a duration of less than 7 years, a moderate-term marriage is a marriage having a duration of greater than 7 years but less than 17 years, and long-term marriage is a marriage having a duration of 17 years or greater. The length of a marriage is the period of time from the date of marriage until the date of filing of an action for dissolution of marriage.

(5) Bridge-the-gap alimony may be awarded to assist a party by providing support to allow the party to make a transition from being married to being single. Bridge-the-gap alimony is designed to assist a party with legitimate identifiable short-term needs, and the length of an award may not exceed 2 years. An award of bridge-the-gap alimony terminates upon the death of either party or upon the remarriage of the party receiving alimony. An award of bridge-the-gap alimony shall not be modifiable in amount or duration.

(6)(a) Rehabilitative alimony may be awarded to assist a party in establishing the capacity for self-support through either:

1. The redevelopment of previous skills or credentials; or

2. The acquisition of education, training, or work experience necessary to develop appropriate employment skills or credentials.

(b) In order to award rehabilitative alimony, there must be a specific and defined rehabilitative plan which shall be included as a part of any order awarding rehabilitative alimony.

(c) An award of rehabilitative alimony may be modified or terminated in accordance with s. 61.14 based upon a substantial change in circumstances, upon noncompliance with the rehabilitative plan, or upon completion of the rehabilitative plan.

(7) Durational alimony may be awarded when permanent periodic alimony is inappropriate. The purpose of durational alimony is to provide a party with economic assistance for a set period of time following a marriage of short or moderate duration or following a marriage of long duration if there is no ongoing need for support on a permanent basis. An award of durational alimony terminates upon the death of either party or upon the remarriage of the party receiving alimony. The amount of an award of durational alimony may be modified or terminated based upon a substantial change in circumstances in accordance with s. 61.14. However, the length of an award of durational alimony may not be modified except under exceptional circumstances and may not exceed the length of the marriage.

(8) Permanent alimony may be awarded to provide for the needs and necessities of life as they were established during the marriage of the parties for a party who lacks the financial ability to meet his or her needs and necessities of life following a dissolution of marriage. Permanent alimony may be awarded following a marriage of long duration if such an award is appropriate upon consideration of the factors set forth in subsection (2), following a marriage of moderate duration if such an award is appropriate based upon clear and convincing evidence after consideration of the factors set forth in subsection (2), or following a marriage of short duration if there are written findings of exceptional circumstances. In awarding permanent alimony, the court shall include a finding that no other form of alimony is fair and reasonable under the circumstances of the parties. An award of permanent alimony terminates upon the death of either party or upon the remarriage of the party receiving alimony. An award may be modified or terminated based upon a substantial change in circumstances or upon the existence of a supportive relationship in accordance with s. 61.14.

(9) The award of alimony may not leave the payor with significantly less net income than the net income of the recipient unless there are written findings of exceptional circumstances.

(10)(a) With respect to any order requiring the payment of alimony entered on or after January 1, 1985, unless the provisions of paragraph (c) or paragraph (d) apply, the court shall direct in the order that the payments of alimony be made through the appropriate depository as provided in s. 61.181.

(b) With respect to any order requiring the payment of alimony entered before January 1, 1985, upon the subsequent appearance, on or after that date, of one or both parties before the court having jurisdiction for the purpose of modifying or enforcing the order or in any other proceeding related to the order, or upon the application of either party, unless the provisions of

paragraph (c) or paragraph (d) apply, the court shall modify the terms of the order as necessary to direct that payments of alimony be made through the appropriate depository as provided in s. 61.181.

(c) If there is no minor child, alimony payments need not be directed through the depository.

(d)1. If there is a minor child of the parties and both parties so request, the court may order that alimony payments need not be directed through the depository. In this case, the order of support shall provide, or be deemed to provide, that either party may subsequently apply to the depository to require that payments be made through the depository. The court shall provide a copy of the order to the depository.

2. If the provisions of subparagraph 1. apply, either party may subsequently file with the depository an affidavit alleging default or arrearages in payment and stating that the party wishes to initiate participation in the depository program. The party shall provide copies of the affidavit to the court and the other party or parties. Fifteen days after receipt of the affidavit, the depository shall notify all parties that future payments shall be directed to the depository.

3. In IV-D cases, the IV-D agency shall have the same rights as the obligee in requesting that payments be made through the depository.

61.125 Parenting coordination.—

(1) PURPOSE.—The purpose of parenting coordination is to provide a child-focused alternative dispute resolution process whereby a parenting coordinator assists the parents in creating or implementing a parenting plan by facilitating the resolution of disputes between the parents by providing education, making recommendations, and, with the prior approval of the parents and the court, making limited decisions within the scope of the court's order of referral.

(2) REFERRAL.—In any action in which a judgment or order has been sought or entered adopting, establishing, or modifying a parenting plan, except for a domestic violence proceeding under chapter 741, and upon agreement of the parties, the court's own motion, or the motion of a party, the court may appoint a parenting coordinator and refer the parties to parenting coordination to assist in the resolution of disputes concerning their parenting plan.

(3) DOMESTIC VIOLENCE ISSUES.—

(a) If there has been a history of domestic violence, the court may not refer the parties to parenting coordination unless both parents consent. The court shall offer each party an opportunity to consult with an attorney or domestic violence advocate before accepting the party's consent. The court must determine whether each party's consent has been given freely and voluntarily.

(b) In determining whether there has been a history of domestic violence, the court shall consider whether a party has committed an act of domestic violence as defined s. 741.28, or child abuse as defined in s. 39.01, against the other party or any member of the other party's family; engaged in a pattern of behaviors that exert power and control over the other party and that may compromise the other party's ability to negotiate a fair result; or engaged in behavior that leads the other party to have reasonable cause to believe he or she is in imminent danger of becoming a victim of domestic violence. The court shall consider and evaluate all relevant factors, including, but not limited to, the factors listed in s. 741.30(6)(b).

(c) If there is a history of domestic violence, the court shall order safeguards to protect the safety of the participants, including, but not limited to, adherence to all provisions of an injunction for protection or conditions of bail, probation, or a sentence arising from criminal proceedings.

(4) QUALIFICATIONS OF A PARENTING COORDINATOR.—A parenting coordinator is an impartial third person whose role is to assist the parents in successfully creating or implementing a parenting plan. Unless there is a written agreement between the parties, the court may appoint only a qualified parenting coordinator.

(a) To be qualified, a parenting coordinator must:

1. Meet one of the following professional requirements:

a. Be licensed as a mental health professional under chapter 490 or chapter 491.

b. Be licensed as a physician under chapter 458, with certification by the American Board of Psychiatry and Neurology.

c. Be certified by the Florida Supreme Court as a family law mediator, with at least a master's degree in a mental health field.

d. Be a member in good standing of The Florida Bar.

2. Complete all of the following:

a. Three years of postlicensure or postcertification practice.

b. A family mediation training program certified by the Florida Supreme Court.

c. A minimum of 24 hours of parenting coordination training in parenting coordination concepts and ethics, family systems theory and application, family dynamics in separation and divorce, child and adolescent development, the parenting coordination process, parenting coordination techniques, and Florida family law and procedure, and a minimum of 4 hours of training in domestic violence and child abuse which is related to parenting coordination.

(b) The court may require additional qualifications to address issues specific to the parties.

(c) A qualified parenting coordinator must be in good standing, or in clear and active status, with his or her respective licensing authority, certification board, or both, as applicable.

(5) DISQUALIFICATIONS OF PARENTING COORDINATOR.—

(a) The court may not appoint a person to serve as parenting coordinator who, in any jurisdiction:

1. Has been convicted or had adjudication withheld on a charge of child abuse, child neglect, domestic violence, parental kidnapping, or interference with custody;

2. Has been found by a court in a child protection hearing to have abused, neglected, or abandoned a child;

3. Has consented to an adjudication or a withholding of adjudication on a petition for dependency; or

4. Is or has been a respondent in a final order or injunction of protection against domestic violence.

(b) A parenting coordinator must discontinue service as a parenting coordinator and immediately report to the court and the parties if any of the disqualifying circumstances described in paragraph (a) occur, or if he or she no longer meets the minimum qualifications in subsection (4), and the court may appoint another parenting coordinator.

(6) FEES FOR PARENTING COORDINATION.—The court shall determine the allocation of fees and costs for parenting coordination between the parties. The court may not order the parties to parenting coordination without their consent unless it determines that the parties have the financial ability to pay the parenting coordination fees and costs.

(a) In determining if a nonindigent party has the financial ability to pay the parenting coordination fees and costs, the court shall consider the party's financial circumstances, including income, assets, liabilities, financial obligations, resources, and whether paying the fees and costs would create a substantial hardship.

(b) If a party is found to be indigent based upon the factors in s. 57.082, the court may not order the party to parenting coordination unless public funds are available to pay the indigent party's allocated portion of the fees and costs or the nonindigent party consents to paying all of the fees and costs.

(7) CONFIDENTIALITY.—Except as otherwise provided in this section, all communications made by, between, or among the parties and the parenting coordinator during parenting coordination sessions are confidential. The parenting coordinator and each party designated in

the order appointing the coordinator may not testify or offer evidence about communications made by, between, or among the parties and the parenting coordinator during parenting coordination sessions, except if:

(a) Necessary to identify, authenticate, confirm, or deny a written agreement entered into by the parties during parenting coordination;

(b) The testimony or evidence is necessary to identify an issue for resolution by the court without otherwise disclosing communications made by any party or the parenting coordinator;

(c) The testimony or evidence is limited to the subject of a party's compliance with the order of referral to parenting coordination, orders for psychological evaluation, counseling ordered by the court or recommended by a health care provider, or for substance abuse testing or treatment;

(d) The parenting coordinator reports that the case is no longer appropriate for parenting coordination;

(e) The parenting coordinator is reporting that he or she is unable or unwilling to continue to serve and that a successor parenting coordinator should be appointed;

(f) The testimony or evidence is necessary pursuant to paragraph (5)(b) or subsection (8);

(g) The parenting coordinator is not qualified to address or resolve certain issues in the case and a more qualified coordinator should be appointed;

(h) The parties agree that the testimony or evidence be permitted; or

(i) The testimony or evidence is necessary to protect any person from future acts that would constitute domestic violence under chapter 741; child abuse, neglect, or abandonment under chapter 39; or abuse, neglect, or exploitation of an elderly or disabled adult under chapter 825.

(8) REPORT OF EMERGENCY TO COURT.—

(a) A parenting coordinator must immediately inform the court by affidavit or verified report without notice to the parties of an emergency situation if:

1. There is a reasonable cause to suspect that a child will suffer or is suffering abuse, neglect, or abandonment as provided under chapter 39;

2. There is a reasonable cause to suspect a vulnerable adult has been or is being abused, neglected, or exploited as provided under chapter 415;

3. A party, or someone acting on a party's behalf, is expected to wrongfully remove or is wrongfully removing the child from the jurisdiction of the court without prior court approval or compliance with the requirements of s. 61.13001. If the parenting coordinator suspects that the

parent has relocated within the state to avoid domestic violence, the coordinator may not disclose the location of the parent and child unless required by court order.

(b) Upon such information and belief, a parenting coordinator shall immediately inform the court by affidavit or verified report and serve a copy on each party of an emergency in which a party obtains a final order or injunction of protection against domestic violence or is arrested for an act of domestic violence as provided under chapter 741.

(9) LIMITATION ON LIABILITY.—A parenting coordinator appointed by the court is not liable for civil damages for any act or omission in the scope of his or her duties pursuant to an order of referral unless such person acted in bad faith or with malicious purpose or in a manner exhibiting wanton and willful disregard for the rights, safety, or property of the parties.

61.122 Parenting plan recommendation; presumption of psychologist's good faith; prerequisite to parent's filing suit; award of fees, costs, reimbursement.—

(1) A psychologist who has been appointed by the court to develop a parenting plan recommendation in a dissolution of marriage, a case of domestic violence, or a paternity matter involving the relationship of a child and a parent, including time-sharing of children, is presumed to be acting in good faith if the psychologist's recommendation has been reached under standards that a reasonable psychologist would use to develop a parenting plan recommendation.

(2) An administrative complaint against a court-appointed psychologist which relates to a parenting plan recommendation conducted by the psychologist may not be filed anonymously. The individual who files an administrative complaint must include in the complaint his or her name, address, and telephone number.

(3) A parent who desires to file a legal action against a court-appointed psychologist who has acted in good faith in developing a parenting plan recommendation must petition the judge who presided over the dissolution of marriage, case of domestic violence, or paternity matter involving the relationship of a child and a parent, including time-sharing of children, to appoint another psychologist. Upon the parent's showing of good cause, the court shall appoint another psychologist. The court shall determine who is responsible for all court costs and attorney's fees associated with making such an appointment.

(4) If a legal action, whether it be a civil action, a criminal action, or an administrative proceeding, is filed against a court-appointed psychologist in a dissolution of marriage, case of domestic violence, or paternity matter involving the relationship of a child and a parent, including time-sharing of children, the claimant is responsible for all reasonable costs and reasonable attorney's fees associated with the action for both parties if the psychologist is held

not liable. If the psychologist is held liable in civil court, the psychologist must pay all reasonable costs and reasonable attorney's fees for the claimant.

61.13002 Temporary time-sharing modification and child support modification due to military service.—

(1) If a supplemental petition or a motion for modification of time-sharing and parental responsibility is filed because a parent is activated, deployed, or temporarily assigned to military service and the parent's ability to comply with time-sharing is materially affected as a result, the court may not issue an order or modify or amend a previous judgment or order that changes time-sharing as it existed on the date the parent was activated, deployed, or temporarily assigned to military service, except that a court may enter a temporary order to modify or amend time-sharing if there is clear and convincing evidence that the temporary modification or amendment is in the best interests of the child. However, a parent's activation, deployment, or temporary assignment to military service and the resultant temporary disruption to the child may not be the sole factor in a court's decision to grant a petition for or modification of permanent time-sharing and parental responsibility. When entering a temporary order under this section, the court shall consider and provide for, if feasible, contact between the military servicemember and his or her child, including, but not limited to, electronic communication by webcam, telephone, or other available means. The court shall also permit liberal time-sharing during periods of leave from military service, as it is in the child's best interests to maintain the parent-child bond during the parent's military service.

(2) If a parent is activated, deployed, or temporarily assigned to military service on orders in excess of 90 days and the parent's ability to comply with time-sharing is materially affected as a result, the parent may designate a person or persons to exercise time-sharing with the child on the parent's behalf. The designation shall be limited to a family member, a stepparent, or a relative of the child by marriage. The designation shall be made in writing and provided to the other parent at least 10 working days before the court-ordered period of time-sharing commences. The other parent may only object to the appointment of the designee on the basis that the designee's time-sharing visitation is not in the best interests of the child. When unable to reach agreement on the delegation, either parent may request an expedited court hearing for a determination on the designation.

(3) The servicemember and the nonmilitary parent shall cooperate with each other in an effort to reach a mutually agreeable resolution of custody, visitation, delegation of visitation, and child support. Each party shall provide information to the other party in an effort to facilitate agreement on custody, visitation, delegation of visitation, and child support. Agreements on designation of persons to exercise time-sharing with the child on the parent's behalf may also be made at the time of dissolution of marriage or other child custody proceedings.

(4) If a temporary order is issued under this section, the court shall reinstate the time-sharing order previously in effect upon the servicemember parent's return from active military service, deployment, or temporary assignment.

(5) Upon motion of either parent for enforcement of rights under this section, the court shall, for good cause shown, hold an expedited hearing in custody and visitation matters instituted under this section, and shall permit the servicemember to testify by telephone, video teleconference, webcam, affidavit, or other means where the military duties of the servicemember parent have a material effect on the parent's ability, or anticipated ability, to appear in person at a regularly scheduled hearing.

(6) If a temporary order is entered under this section, the court may address the issue of support for the child by:

(a) Entering an order of temporary support from the servicemember to the other parent under s. 61.30;

(b) Requiring the servicemember to enroll the child as a military dependent with DEERs, TriCare, or other similar benefits available to military dependents as provided by the service member's branch of service and federal regulations; or

(c) Suspending, abating, or reducing the child support obligation of the nonservice member until the custody judgment or time-share order previously in effect is reinstated.

(7) This section does not apply to permanent change of station moves by military personnel, which shall be governed by s. 61.13001

61.19 Entry of judgment of dissolution of marriage, delay period.—No final judgment of dissolution of marriage may be entered until at least 20 days have elapsed from the date of filing the original petition for dissolution of marriage; but the court, on a showing that injustice would result from this delay, may enter a final judgment of dissolution of marriage at an earlier date.

61.20 Social investigation and recommendations regarding a parenting plan.—

(1) In any action where the parenting plan is at issue because the parents are unable to agree, the court may order a social investigation and study concerning all pertinent details relating to the child and each parent when such an investigation has not been done and the study therefrom provided to the court by the parties or when the court determines that the investigation and study that have been done are insufficient. The agency, staff, or person conducting the investigation and study ordered by the court pursuant to this section shall furnish the court and all parties of record in the proceeding a written study containing recommendations, including a written statement of facts found in the social investigation on which the recommendations are based. The court may consider the information contained in the study in making a decision on the parenting plan, and the technical rules of evidence do not exclude the study from consideration.

(2) A social investigation and study, when ordered by the court, shall be conducted by qualified staff of the court; a child-placing agency licensed pursuant to s. 409.175; a psychologist licensed pursuant to chapter 490; or a clinical social worker, marriage and family therapist, or mental health counselor licensed pursuant to chapter 491. If a certification of indigence based on an affidavit filed with the court pursuant to s. 57.081 is provided by an adult party to the proceeding and the court does not have qualified staff to perform the investigation and study, the court may request that the Department of Children and Family Services conduct the investigation and study.

(3) Except as to persons who obtain certification of indigence as specified in subsection (2), for whom no costs are incurred, the parents involved in a proceeding to determine a parenting plan where the court has ordered the performance of a social investigation and study are responsible for paying the costs of the investigation and study. Upon submitting the study to the court, the agency, staff, or person performing the study shall include a bill for services, which shall be taxed and ordered paid as costs in the proceeding.

Uniform Child Custody Jurisdiction and Enforcement Act falls under Title VI of the Florida Statutes

61.502 Purposes of part; construction of provisions.—The general purposes of this part are to:

(1) Avoid jurisdictional competition and conflict with courts of other states in matters of child custody which have in the past resulted in the shifting of children from state to state with harmful effects on their well-being.

(2) Promote cooperation with the courts of other states to the end that a custody decree is rendered in the state that can best decide the case in the interest of the child.

(3) Discourage the use of the interstate system for continuing controversies over child custody.

(4) Deter abductions.

(5) Avoid relitigating the custody decisions of other states in this state.

(6) Facilitate the enforcement of custody decrees of other states.

(7) Promote and expand the exchange of information and other forms of mutual assistance between the courts of this state and those of other states concerned with the same child.

(8) Make uniform the law with respect to the subject of this part among the states enacting it.

61.507 Effect of child custody determination.—A child custody determination made by a court of this state which had jurisdiction under this part binds all persons who have been served in accordance with the laws of this state or notified in accordance with s. 61.509 or who have submitted to the jurisdiction of the court, and who have been given an opportunity to be heard. As to those persons, the determination is conclusive as to all decided issues of law and fact except to the extent the determination is modified.

61.511 Communication between courts.—

(1) A court of this state may communicate with a court in another state concerning a proceeding arising under this part.

(2) The court shall allow the parties to participate in the communication. If the parties elect to participate in the communication, they must be given the opportunity to present facts and legal arguments before a decision on jurisdiction is made.

(3) Communication between courts on schedules, calendars, court records, and similar matters may occur without informing the parties. A record need not be made of the communication.

(4) Except as otherwise provided in subsection (3), a record must be made of a communication under this section. The parties must be informed promptly of the communication and granted access to the record.

(5) For purposes of this section, the term “record” means a form of information, including, but not limited to, an electronic recording or transcription by a court reporter which creates a verbatim memorialization of any communication between two or more individuals or entities.