

NOTICE REGARDING FAMILY MATTERS IN THE ONTARIO COURT OF JUSTICE STRATFORD

December 8, 2020

A. Scheduling of Family Matters at the Ontario Court of Justice Notice:

The Scheduling of Family Matters at the Ontario Court of Justice Notice was revised and posted on the Court's website on November 17, 2020. There are **two changes of note**:

1. Beginning November 30, 2020, **First Appearance Court/First Court Date** before a clerk will no longer be waived. These appearances before a clerk will resume and they will be held remotely; and
2. Beginning November 30, 2020, **Affidavits of Service** (Form 6B) must be filed for all family law documents that have been served on the other party, as per the *Family Law Rules*.

B. Settlement Conferences in Stratford, Woodstock and Guelph:

Commencing January 2021, there will be a rotation of judges presiding over settlement conferences in Woodstock, Stratford and Guelph. The following filing protocols will apply starting January 6, 2021:

1. Do not assume that the presiding Justice has the complete file. The **only** materials available for any settlement conference will include the following:
 - a. The settlement conference briefs
 - b. Confirmations
 - c. Any OCL report (s. 112 report/Voice of the Child)
 - d. If a Society Status Review Application or Motion to Change, the final order under review.
 - e. The past 3 endorsements and all temporary orders in the present proceeding (ie/ in the present SRA or MTC)
2. Settlement Conference briefs and Confirmations **must be filed pursuant to the Rules.**

3. Settlement Conference Briefs will be limited to **6 pages**, and a total of **10 pages with attachments**, unless the judge endorses otherwise. Briefs longer than 10 pages **will not** be accepted.

4. **All settlement conferences will be held by Zoom unless otherwise advised.**

5. Settlement conference briefs may be filed electronically using the Family Submissions Online (see: www.ontario.ca/familyclaims). Briefs that cannot be submitted through the Family Submissions Online will still be accepted by email at:

- a. Stratford.Courthouse@ontario.ca
- b. Woodstock.Courthouse@ontario.ca
- c. GuelphOCJFamily@ontario.ca

6. When a document is filed electronically, it is not necessary to file a paper copy. Parties may use email to serve a settlement conference brief without the other party's consent or court order. However, a reminder that as of November 30, 2020, affidavits of service must be filed for all family law documents.

7. Documents can be accepted in-person at the courthouse. Entry to the courthouse will be controlled and subject to screening requirements. The court counters are only open between 9 a.m. to 11 a.m. and 2 p.m. to 4 p.m.

8. Clients may contact the Legal Aid Office to speak with a lawyer before the settlement conference at:

- a. **Stratford: 519-273-8120**
- b. **Woodstock: 519-421-2491**
- c. **Guelph: 519-767-1514**

C. Legal Aid Ontario's Motion to Change Document Preparation:

Legal Aid Ontario announced a new initiative to prepare documents for financially eligible family law litigants who have motions to change custody, access, or child support. If litigants are eligible, they will be referred to a LAO family lawyer for assistance. The initiative is currently in effect.

D. New Motions to Change Forms:

A reminder that the new Motions to Change forms came into effect on December 1, 2020. Please note that the issuance of old forms will no longer be an option.

E. Legal Aid Ontario's Family Law Information Program (FLIP)
Decommissioned:

Due to IT limitations, effective December 31, 2020 the FLIP hosted on Legal Aid Ontario's (LAO) website will no longer be available. LAO launched the FLIP on March 2, 2011 to provide an online alternative to the in-person Mandatory Information Program (MIP). The online FLIP site allowed users to print out a certificate at the end of the program; this certificate was accepted by many court locations in lieu of having to attend an in-person MIP session. Family court litigants or members of the public who would like to attend a virtual MIP will be directed to contact the Family Mediation and Information Service provider for their region.

December 8, 2020

Justice K. Stacy Neill