



## **Section 211 - Views of the Child (Full or basic evaluative report)**

A Section 211 Full Report provides objective, balanced and fair information to the court about your child or children and their family relationships. A Section 211 Full Report considers the issues before the court according to Section 37 of the Family Law Act; the *best interests of the child*.

All S.211 reports, whether they are a full report or a basic views of the child report, are designed to assist with dispute resolution. They should be helpful in developing plans and agreements that are best support the wellbeing of the children involved. A well-prepared section 211 report or an evaluative views of the child report, may help remove barriers in stalled negotiations by offering the parties another piece of critical information to reach an agreement. Recommendations offered may clarify key factors that help an arbitrator or judge, faced with often contradictory evidence, make the difficult decisions about parenting or care.

Of course the most common question I get asked is **what does a S.211 assessment cost?**

The simple answer is that It is hard to estimate the cost of these reports because every family situation is different. Some families have greater complication than others so estimating the time it might take to complete a S.211 can be difficult. I can tell you that I charge \$200 per hour and provide details for time spent on reports. The low end estimate is \$10-12,000 and the high end estimate is \$18-20,000 when there is more complexity to understanding the family situation.

How many work hours also depends on the questions that need answering for the court, and whether a **full** S. 211 report with psychological testing and scoring is necessary or not. Forensic testing takes more time and there are additional costs involved with accessing these measures, scoring them and interpreting the data. In cases where there are mental health, safety, parenting competency or substance dependency concerns, or even when serious estrangement or alienation problems are present, these measures can often be necessary to get the answers.

If your family needs a basic Views of the Child evaluation, then the report would include only clinical interviews, observations, professional contacts and document review, which means the report preparation time can also be shorter. A Disclosure meeting is a *required* step for all reports to go over the results.

Here's the breakdown of the various components that may or may not be included and the estimate of time:

Review legal documents and any other relevant documents	2-7 hrs.
Clinical interview with parents	4-8 hrs.
Observation of children with parents	4-9 hrs.
Interviews with children (assuming 2)	2-3 hrs
Interview professionals (Teachers, Therapists, Doctors)	2-5 hrs.
Correspondence with clients/ legal (email and phone)	2-3 hrs.
Interview personal references for parents	2-4 hrs.
Psychological tests, scoring and interpretation (+access costs)	4-7 hrs.
Report preparation	25-40 hrs.
Local travel time for observations or child interviews (if necessary)	6-8 hrs.
Disclosure meeting - to review report with parents	1-2 hrs

**Estimated Total Hours** **54-95 hrs.**

An initial retainer of \$5000 is required before an assessment starts then payment in full is required before the report is released.

Another question asked is: **I have a new partner in the home, what about them?**

Evaluators must assess both of the children’s guardians and any other adults or caregivers currently living in the children’s residence. This means that live-in partners must agree to a certain level of participation in the evaluation process. Generally this includes a clinical interview, attending observation visits and possibly criminal records checks. Other pieces may also be necessary depending on the identified questions that need answering about the family.

Parents often want to know: **What will my child’s involvement in this process be?**

It is normal to worry about how children may be impacted by the evaluation process when it is designed to consider their best interests. It does mean that children, whenever appropriate, will be included in the interviews, observations and sometimes even the psychological measures if there are questions about the specific needs of the child. As a child specialist, I work hard to minimize their worries, and I am very aware of the possible impact that participating in an S.211 process might have. In most cases, children want to have their wants and wishes heard. It helps for them to be assured that their piece is only one of many pieces that go into the report. The final decisions are always made by the adults, so they do not need to worry that the outcome rests on their shoulders.

In situations where youth are old enough, I am required to get their consent to participate in the process as well. It is within their rights, as an adolescent, to decide how much they want to be a part of the S.211 process. For all children, I am required to explain the purpose, benefits and risks that come with the S.211 evaluation. After the interview, I am required to ensure that what is recorded from interviews with young people, accurately reflects what they meant to say.

**I have other questions.**

More details about these reports are outlined in the Informed Consent document that parties review and sign before work begins. A copy is available on the website for download and review. If you have any other questions or concerns about Section 211 reports, please feel free to reach out for more information.