BFA Sample Questions

(Remember – unless this is a BFA for a Psychological Evaluation or an Updated Child Custody Evaluation, choose no more than 1-3 questions.)

1. Rights, Powers, and Duties

- What has been each parent's historical and current role in meeting the children's medical needs, including scheduling, attending, and following through with recommended care?
- What has been each parent's historical and current role in meeting the children's dental needs?
- What has been each parent's historical and current involvement in the children's counseling, psychiatric care, or other behavioral-health services?
- What has been each parent's historical and current contribution to meeting the children's psychological and psychiatric needs, including adherence to treatment recommendations?
- What has been each parent's historical and current involvement in the children's educational needs, including communication with teachers, support staff, and school-based services?
- What has been each parent's historical and current involvement in the children's extracurricular activities, including transportation, attendance, and support?
- Has either parent made decisions contrary to the recommendations of medical, mental-health, or educational providers? If so, which parent, what decisions were made, and what was the impact on the children?
- How effectively do the parents engage in co-parenting, including communication, decision-making, and conflict management?
- How do the parents interact when both are present at the children's activities, appointments, or events?
- Have the children's schools or professional providers been exposed to parental conflict? If so, what occurred, and what was the observed or reported impact on the children?

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2. Overnight Periods of Possession

- What does the peer-reviewed literature indicate regarding overnight parenting arrangements for children of this age and developmental stage?
- What has the child's parenting plan been since birth?
- What has the child's parenting plan been since the parents' separation?
- What has each parent's historical and current involvement in the child's medical care been?
- What has been each parent's historical and current involvement in the child's day care, preschool, or daily childcare arrangements?

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- Has the child formed significant attachment relationships with individuals outside the parents (e.g., grandparents, childcare providers, religious nursery staff, babysitters)? If so, how do these relationships function?
- How have exchanges between the parents occurred historically and currently, including any patterns of difficulty or ease?
- How does the child adjust following transitions between households?
- How does each parent support the child's relationship with the other parent?
- Is either parent engaging in gatekeeping behaviors? If so, which parent, what behaviors are observed, and does the data support that the gatekeeping is protective or restrictive?

3. Special Needs Children

- What are the child's current diagnoses, functional profile, and treatment plan(s) across medical, developmental, educational, and therapeutic domains?
- What has the child's parenting plan been since birth?
- What has the child's parenting plan been since the separation?
- What has been each parent's historical and current involvement in the child's medical care, therapies, and educational programming?
- Do the parents agree on the child's diagnoses, needs, and recommended treatment plan(s)? If not, what are the specific areas of disagreement?
- How does the child adjust to transitions between households, particularly in relation to their special needs?
- What does the peer-reviewed literature indicate about the child's specific diagnosis and anticipated future needs?
- What does the literature indicate about the needs of children with this diagnosis during parental separation or divorce?
- What parenting-plan structures are supported by the literature for children with this diagnosis?
- What factors should be considered in developing a parenting plan for this child, given their specific needs, functioning, and treatment requirements?

4. Allegations of Abuse

- What are the specific allegations of abuse, including nature, timing, and context?
- Who made the allegation(s), and under what circumstances?
- How does each parent describe or respond to the allegations?
- Have the allegations been investigated by CPS, law enforcement, or other professionals? If so, what were the findings?
- Is there evidence that the child has been coached, influenced, or pressured regarding any outcry? If so, by whom, in what manner, and with what impact on the child?

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- Does the child express fear of the alleged perpetrator? If so, what is the nature and basis of that fear?
- Is the child currently in therapy? If so, what is the child's progress and what themes have emerged?
- What does the literature indicate about reunification following confirmed abuse?
- What factors does the literature identify as relevant in determining whether reunification is appropriate?
- What does the literature indicate about step-up parenting plans or structured reunification schedules in cases involving abuse or neglect?

5. Relocation

- What does the peer-reviewed literature indicate about relocation for children of this age and developmental stage?
- What factors does the literature identify as relevant in relocation determinations?
- What are the relocating parent's reasons for seeking relocation, and what is their proposed plan for the child, including maintaining the child's relationship with the other parent? What is their plan if relocation is denied?
- What are the opposing parent's reasons for objecting to relocation, and what is their proposed plan for the child if relocation is granted or denied?
- How have the parents historically and currently co-parented, particularly regarding communication, flexibility, and conflict management?
- What parenting-plan structures are supported by the literature for relocation cases involving children of this age?
- What are the potential risks and benefits to the child if relocation is granted or denied?

6. Parent Child Contact Problems

- What factors—child-related, parent-related, relational, environmental—appear to be contributing to the child's resistance or refusal of contact?
- What changes in behavior, communication, or parenting practices would support the rejected parent's relationship with the child?
- What changes in behavior, communication, or parenting practices would support the preferred parent's facilitation of the child's relationship with the other parent?
- How have the parents historically and currently co-parented? If deterioration has occurred, what are the causes and what impact has this had on the child?
- Has the child participated in individual therapy? If so, what has been the benefit or limitation of that intervention?
- Have either or both parents participated in individual therapy? If so, what has been the benefit or limitation of that intervention?

- Has the family participated in reunification therapy? If so, what has been the benefit or limitation of that intervention?
- Does any member of the family system appear to need individual therapy? If so, who and for what purpose?
- Does reunification therapy appear indicated? If so, what type of provider qualifications would be appropriate? If not, what alternative interventions are supported by the literature?
- What does the literature indicate about the specific resist/refuse dynamics present in this family?
- What parenting-plan structures are supported by the literature for families engaged in reunification therapy?
- What factors should be considered in determining a parenting plan in cases involving resist/refuse dynamics?

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7. Mental Health History, Stability, and Parenting Impact

- What is the parent's current mental health status based on available records, interviews, and collateral information?
- To what extent is the parent compliant with their prescribed medication regimen and treatment plan?
- How stable has the parent's functioning been over the past 6–12 months?
- What observable impact, if any, does the parent's mental health condition have on their day-to-day parenting abilities?
- Are there any current symptoms or patterns of behavior that raise concerns about the parent's ability to provide safe, consistent care?
- Based on peer-reviewed research, what are the known parenting-related implications of the parent's diagnosed condition?
- Is there evidence that the parent's mental health condition is creating risk of harm or emotional distress for the child?
- What supports, monitoring, or treatment adjustments might reduce risk and improve parenting stability?

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8. Substance Use and Parenting Capacity

- What is the parent's history of substance use, treatment, relapse, and recovery?
- What is the parent's current pattern of use, abstinence, or relapse risk?
- How does the parent's substance use history affect their ability to provide safe, stable care?
- Are there observable parenting deficits or safety concerns linked to substance use?
- What do collateral sources (e.g., treatment providers, testing results) indicate about current functioning?

- What level of monitoring, testing, or treatment engagement would be appropriate to ensure child safety?
- How does the parent understand the impact of their substance use on the child?

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9. Co-Parenting Functioning and Parallel Parenting Considerations

- How effectively do the parents communicate about the child's needs?
- What specific behaviors or patterns are contributing to co-parenting conflict?
- What is each parent's contribution to communication breakdowns or conflict escalation?
- How do the parents handle decision-making, information sharing, and transitions?
- Does the level of conflict suggest that a parallel parenting structure would better protect the child?
- What co-parenting supports or interventions (e.g., coordination, facilitation) would be beneficial?

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10. Home Environment and Safety

- What are the strengths and weaknesses of each parent's home environment as observed during home visits?
- Are there safety concerns, supervision issues, or environmental risks in either home?
- How does each home support the child's developmental, emotional, and educational needs?
- How do the homes compare in terms of structure, routine, and appropriateness for the child's age and needs?
- Are there concerns about individuals residing in or frequently visiting either home?

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11. Exchange Procedures

- What challenges or safety concerns have occurred during prior exchanges?
- How does the child respond to transitions between homes?
- Are there patterns of conflict, intimidation, or emotional dysregulation during exchanges?
- Would supervised exchanges reduce risk or distress for the child?
- What exchange structure (location, supervision level, timing) would best support the child's well-being?

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12. Allegations of Coaching or Undue Influence

- Is there evidence that either parent is coaching, pressuring, or influencing the child's statements or preferences?
- How consistent are the child's statements across interviews and contexts?
- Are the child's statements developmentally appropriate and internally coherent?
- What behaviors or communication patterns from either parent may be shaping the child's views?
- What collateral information supports or contradicts allegations of undue influence?

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13. Need for Counseling or Therapeutic Intervention

- Does the child exhibit emotional, behavioral, or relational concerns that warrant therapeutic intervention?
- Would either parent benefit from individual therapy to support healthier parenting or co-parenting?
- What type of therapeutic intervention (individual, family, reunification, skills-based) is most appropriate?
- What qualifications or characteristics should the treating professional have?
- What goals should a treatment plan reasonably include based on the family's needs?
- How can therapy be structured to avoid role confusion or forensic contamination?

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14. Child's Stated Preferences and the Basis for Those Preferences

- What are the child's stated preferences regarding time with each parent, and how consistently does the child express these preferences across interviews and contexts?
- How developmentally appropriate is the child's reasoning for their stated preferences?
- What factors appear to be influencing the child's preferences (e.g., parenting style, routines, conflict exposure, anxiety, temperament, special needs)?
- To what extent does the child demonstrate an understanding of the implications of their preferences?
- Are the child's preferences based on comfort, fear, loyalty conflicts, perceived pressure, or other identifiable emotional or relational dynamics?
- How does the child describe their relationship with each parent, and how does this relate to their stated preferences?
- Are there indicators that the child's preferences may be influenced by external sources (e.g., parents, extended family, peers, professionals)?
- How stable or fluctuating are the child's preferences over time or across different settings?

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- What aspects of each parent's home, routines, or interactions does the child identify as contributing to their preferences?
- What supports or interventions might help the child express their views more freely and reduce pressure, loyalty conflicts, or anxiety related to choosing between parents?

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