

FIRM: "We give them a reality check."

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The evaluators' neutrality doesn't hurt either, Seuss said. Sometimes, it's a reality check for the parents.

"We give them a reality check, and there's been times when it almost seems brutal," she said. "But we tell parents what they're asking for isn't realistic. This is a lot of times where the tears come in because mom thinks she's the good mom and dad thinks he's the good dad, but what they're asking for really isn't what's best for these kids."

Springer said it's all about putting children first.

"The best interest of the parents isn't always in terms of dollars," Springer said. "I think that's where there needs to

be a shift in the mindset ... Is it better for them to have an extra \$100 a month in child support, or is it better for them to have a good relationship with their children?"

While Southeastern Minnesota Family Support Center is new to Mower County, it's part of a growing trend in Minnesota, Benson said. He said in eight of Minnesota's 10 judicial districts, some form of ENE is occurring.

"It's catching on, and it's one of the first things we encourage for resolving family law cases," he said. "Early neutral evaluation has turned out to be one of the most effective forms of alternative dispute resolution in family law."