

Article

Parenting Coordination in Spanish Jurisprudence (2012-2024)

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ABSTRACT

Parenting coordination emerged in the United States of America in the 1990s as a specialized intervention to manage high-conflict parental separations, with the goal of protecting children by reducing interparental disputes. This study analyzes its introduction in Spain through case law from 2012 to 2024. Of 883 judicial rulings identified, 389 were examined that approved or sustained parenting coordination. The highest number of cases occurred in Catalonia and the Valencian Community, followed by Madrid, Murcia, and Navarre. Courts rulings are based on the best interests of the child and the need to ensure compliance with judicial measures or parenting plans. Although not yet legally regulated in Spain, parenting coordination is supported by constitutional principles, the Civil Code, and international child protection standards. The findings reveal uneven implementation across regions, with greater prevalence in areas where specific services or projects exist. A consolidated body of jurisprudence—particularly in Catalonia—supports the legitimacy of parenting coordination. The study concludes with a recommendation for its formal legal regulation.

La Coordinación de Parentalidad en la Jurisprudencia Española (2012-2024)

RESUMEN

Palabras clave

Coordinación de parentalidad
Coparentalidad
Divorcio contencioso
Intervención familiar
Jurisprudencia Española

La coordinación de parentalidad surgió en los años 90 en EE. UU. como intervención profesional especializada para abordar rupturas de pareja altamente litigantes en las que proteger a los hijos al reducir la conflictividad. Para conocer cómo se ha introducido en España, se analiza su evolución en la jurisprudencia entre 2012 y 2024. De 883 resoluciones judiciales encontradas, se analizaron 389 que la acordaban/mantenían. Destacan Cataluña y Comunidad Valenciana, seguidas por Madrid, Murcia y Navarra. Las decisiones judiciales se fundamentan en el interés superior del menor y en garantizar el cumplimiento de medidas judiciales y/o planes de parentalidad. Aunque no está regulada en España, se apoya en principios constitucionales, Código Civil y normativa internacional sobre infancia. Se concluye que la implementación es desigual entre comunidades, siendo más frecuente donde existen proyectos o servicios específicos, y que existe una jurisprudencia consolidada, especialmente en Cataluña, que respalda esta figura. Se recomienda su regulación legal.

Parenting coordination emerged in the early 1990s in the US as a specialized approach for families in high-conflict post-breakup situations with minor children affected by this situation (Coates et al., 2004; Kelly, 2014; Shear, 2008). Initially, its practice spread to Canada (Fidler & Epstein, 2008), and later expanded to different judicial systems around the world, including Spain. The characteristics of the role are the same in all countries where it has been introduced, regardless of their socio-legal singularities (Capdevila et al., 2020; Kelly, 2014). Its development responds to the need to reduce litigation, ensure compliance with court rulings, and, above all, prioritize the well-being of children in highly conflictive contexts (Pérez, 2019).

In cases involving the breakdown of the parental couple's cohabitation, high-conflict situations are characterized by widespread negative exchanges that create a hostile and insecure emotional environment for children (Anderson et al., 2011). In the judicial sphere, this translates into highly litigated cases where intense disputes are resolved, resulting in multiple proceedings that are usually prolonged and repeated over time.

These cases represent a challenge for the judicial system and for legal practitioners, as parents become involved in proceedings that consume enormous amounts of time and administrative resources (D'Abate, 2005). Not to mention the impact this has on individuals, especially children (Capdevila, 2016).

It is well known that court rulings do not resolve relational issues: "the legal relationships that are aired in family proceedings carry an inevitable emotional charge that legal practitioners cannot ignore when considering the resolution of the conflict exclusively from a legal standpoint" (Sentencia TSJC 1/2017 de 12 de enero [Judgment of the High Court of Catalonia of January 12]). Furthermore, these adults repeatedly turn to the courts to air their disagreements, which is why the judiciary must seek to respond appropriately to the complexity of the situations (Capdevila et al., 2019; Lauroba, 2018; Ortúño, 2014).

Parenting coordination has been defined as an alternative conflict resolution process focused on the interests of children and adolescents, in which a highly trained and experienced professional assists the parents with the aim of minimizing conflicts between them, and helping them to focus on their children's needs and implement a parenting plan for the benefit of the children (Association of Family and Conciliation Courts, AFCC, 2006, 2020; APA, 2012).

The professionals who practice it achieve this overall objective of safeguarding the well-being of children by helping to reduce parental conflict (promoting improved communication, offering dispute resolution strategies, and helping with emotional venting) and encouraging more functional co-parenting. In addition, they support the effective implementation of court rulings by analyzing and helping to ensure that parenting plans are appropriately tailored to the particular needs of each family and their children. Both these objectives and the functions to be performed are set out in the guidelines of the Association of Family and Conciliation Courts (AFCC, 2006; 2020), which in its Guideline VI establishes the key functions: psychoeducational, evaluative, case coordination and management, and conflict management.

The implementation of parenting coordination represents an advance in managing intense family conflicts, as it incorporates a professional, technical, and specialized role that transcends the

judicial sphere. It involves a hybrid intervention—legal, psychological, and educational—focused on the protection of children and adolescents, parenting training, and the promotion of both positive parenting and co-parenting. It is key to facilitating sustainable change, reducing the judicial burden, and promoting shared responsibility. This role (Rodríguez & Carbonell, 2014) is a field of professional development that was introduced in Spain more than a decade ago. It is being developed primarily by psychology professionals, both in the forensic field and as mediators, as well as highly trained and specialized social intervention professionals (Tejedor et al., 2025)—a requirement deemed essential by various national and international expert associations (AFCC, 2006, 2020; Rosales et al., 2019).

Although undergoing parenting coordination may be a decision agreed upon by the parents themselves, when the separation or divorce process takes place in highly conflictual contexts, the lack of consensus is such that it usually has to be ordered by the court. According to a recent survey of professionals who practice parenting coordination in Spain, two-thirds of the cases they report having handled have come to them through court referral (Tejedor et al., 2025). Parenting coordination is usually established as a means of supporting compliance with the court order, to help parents reduce the level of conflict and improve communication, with the ultimate and priority objective of protecting the best interests of the children (Coates et al., 2004; Emery et al., 2014; González, 2019).

This is also often reflected in court rulings: "From an analysis of case law, it can be concluded that the imposition of the intervention of a parenting coordinator is justified by the need to protect the best interests of the children and facilitate the effective implementation of court measures. At the same time, it seeks to avoid the emotional risk to minors arising from conflict between their parents" (Sentencia TSJC 62/2023 de 26 de octubre).

In Spain, the adoption of parenting coordination has been framed within the paradigm of therapeutic jurisprudence (Fariña et al., 2017b; Arch & Fariña, 2023). At a technical level, it is regulated by the guidelines of the Association of Family and Conciliation Courts (AFCC, 2006, 2020) and the American Psychological Association (APA, 2012). These guidelines have been translated and adapted by the Official College of Psychology of Catalonia (Colegio Oficial de Psicología de Cataluña [COPC], 2021), which has guided the professionalization of the role and promoted the implementation of standardized protocols that ensure the quality of the intervention. Thanks to these international references, clear criteria have been established for the selection, training, and supervision of those who work as parenting coordinators. This guarantees that such interventions are carried out under ethical principles of impartiality and with a focus on the well-being of children. Adapting these best practices to the Spanish context has addressed cultural and legal specificities, facilitating the integration of parenting coordination as a relevant and effective tool for managing complex family conflicts. Thus, parenting coordination is consolidated as an innovative response that balances judicial intervention with psychosocial support, contributing to the comprehensive protection of children and adolescents within the family justice system.

The implementation of the practice of parenting coordination recognizes the need for specialized psychosocial interventions in serious family conflicts. Its introduction in Spain, even without specific regulation, validates the versatility of legal psychology,

mediation, and social and community psychology to respond to social challenges with new and adapted tools. It also reinforces the preventive and restorative role of psychology and positions it as a key discipline in a more humanized justice system focused on child protection.

Families who are legally required to undergo parenting coordination, in addition to meeting the criterion of high conflict, do so because it has been shown that this has an impact on the stability and psycho-emotional well-being of their children.

Cases of active domestic violence, drug addiction, and/or severe mental illness are grounds for exclusion (Fariña et al., 2017a; COPC, 2025; Vázquez et al., 2018).

As Rodríguez and Carbonell (2014) mention, in Spain, the first court ruling requiring a family to undergo parenting coordination was issued by the *Audiencia Provincial de Barcelona* [Provincial Court of Barcelona] in 2013. Subsequently, pilot projects were carried out in the city of Sabadell and in Catalonia through the *Centro de Mediación de Dret Privat de Catalunya* [Dret Privat de Catalunya Mediation Center]. Subsequently, projects were launched in different autonomous communities, such as the Valencian Community (Castellón and Valencia), Zaragoza, Málaga, Madrid, and the Chartered Community of Navarre (Vázquez et al., 2018). Recent studies highlight that this intervention model is being used in the region of Murcia, the Balearic Islands, Castilla-La Mancha, and the Canary Islands (Tejedor et al., 2025).

The introduction of parenting coordination was driven by the need to address cases of high interparental conflict more effectively (Arias & Ortúño, 2019). However, it should be noted that neither at that time nor at present do we have specific legal regulations on parenting coordination in Spain, largely due to the failure of the draft law on the exercise of joint parental responsibility and other measures to be adopted after the breakdown of cohabitation, which remained in the preliminary draft stage (Muñoz, 2015), and the interruption, before its implementation at the end of 2018, of the pilot project proposed by the Ministry of Justice for some of the autonomous communities that did not have delegated justice powers (Ministerio de Justicia, 2018). Although reference to parenting coordination has recently been included in regional legislation—*Ley Foral 21/2019*—no steps have yet been taken towards its effective regulation at the national level.

Therefore, court rulings establishing parenting coordination rely on the authority of family courts, supported by specific and/or general regulations at the regional, state, European, and international levels. These enable courts to monitor the measures established in court rulings and decisions when conflict in parental relationships affects children's well-being (Ortúño 2014; Capdevila et al., 2019). This is key to understanding the position of parenting coordination within family law and its link to child protection (Broto & Fernández, 2024).

The main objective of this analysis of case law was to provide a rigorous and detailed understanding of the processes of implementation and development of parenting coordination in Spain. The aim is to systematically examine the evolution of this concept in the different autonomous communities, identify the legal basis for the court rulings that impose it, and interpret the scope and current trends in its application in the national legal and psychosocial context. In addition, this study seeks to contribute to the consolidation of scientific knowledge on parenting coordination,

providing a solid basis for future research and proposals for improvement in professional intervention in complex family conflicts.

Method

Procedure

The search for court rulings was carried out using the case law database of the *Centro de Documentación Judicial* [Judicial Documentation Center] (CENDOJ) of the *Consejo General del Poder Judicial* [General Council of the Judiciary]. This database offers open and free access to court rulings (primarily) from collegiate courts—which are the bodies that generate case law—in Spain.

The search was carried out in April 2025. The search terms were the keywords: “*Coordinador Parental*” [Parental Coordinator] or “*Coordinador Parentalidad*” [Parenting Coordinator]. Civil jurisdiction and date were set as filters. The starting year was set at 2012, because the first mention of parenting coordination in Spain was not recorded until that year (Vázquez et al., 2018), as reported in the first and only analysis to date of court rulings in Spain that has been published in scientific journals (Fariña et al., 2017a).

The search yielded a total of 883 court rulings between January 1, 2012, and December 31, 2024 (see Figure 1 for an illustration of the process). After the first review, 302 rulings that did not refer to this type of intervention were eliminated. After a further reading of the remaining rulings, 7 were eliminated because they corresponded to cassation appeals to the Supreme Court that were repetitive of cases already covered in the rulings of the Provincial Courts; 185 were eliminated because parenting coordination was mentioned only due to a parent's request, but the court did not consider it appropriate or necessary (127), or because the court simply mentioned it as a resource that the parents or the public prosecutor could request or appeal during sentence enforcement if difficulties arose later (58). In these cases, it is usually mentioned alongside the possibility of using mediation services or requesting the intervention of a PEF (Punto de Encuentro Familiar [Family Meeting Point]).

Finally, the number of court rulings to be analyzed was N=389, as these were the ones that met the inclusion criteria: parenting coordination was agreed upon or the measure that had been agreed upon in the court of first instance was maintained. The details by year can be seen in Table 1.

Data Analysis

It was considered essential to analyze the distribution of court rulings according to the body that issued them, the type of ruling, its territorial origin, and the evolution in the number of cases over the years.

The legal basis for the imposition of parenting coordination by the courts was also examined.

A detailed study of the specific objectives set out in the rulings, the issues addressed by the professionals responsible for parenting coordination, and an analysis of the functions and requirements associated with the performance of this role were reserved for a complementary publication, given the magnitude and richness of the information collected.

Figure 1
Process of Obtaining the Court Rulings Analyzed

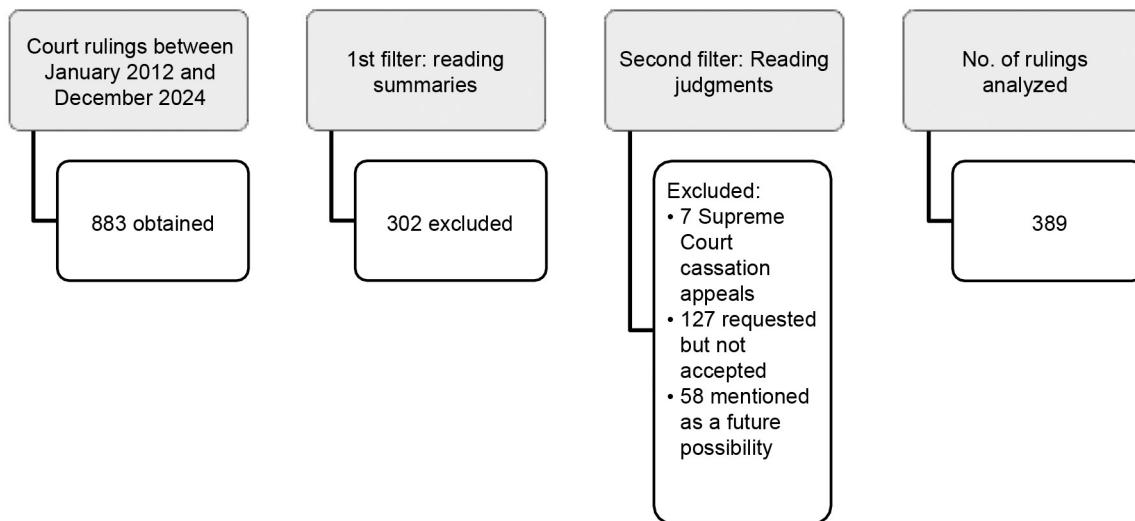


Table 1
Number of Court Rulings Reviewed and Analyzed per Year

Year	No. of court rulings reviewed	No. of court rulings agreeing to or maintaining parenting coordination
2012	7	0
2013	13	6
2014	22	12
2015	33	14
2016	36	13
2017	42	18
2018	77	27
2019	77	24
2020	106	42
2021	141	77
2022	143	58
2023	105	55
2024	81	43
TOTAL	883	389

For the purposes of analysis, the court rulings were subjected to a systematic coding process. First, a list of categories was drawn up with the appropriate variables corresponding to the aspects to be analyzed in the study. Subsequently, two expert coders independently read the content of the rulings, filling in an Excel file and assigning the information to the corresponding category, thus completing the first part of the analysis with the qualitative information.

Once this initial data extraction was complete, a sharing session was held to review the discrepancies detected between the two coders. These discrepancies were discussed and resolved by consensus, with the aim of reaching a final agreed version of the data, thus ensuring the consistency and reliability of the entire database analyzed.

It should be noted that initial inter-coder agreement was assessed using the kappa index ($k=0.96$), while final agreement after consensus was reached was total. This methodological strategy allowed independence in the initial phase to be combined with consensus-based validation in the final phase, increasing the robustness of the analysis.

Finally, the qualitative part was carried out by performing a descriptive analysis of frequencies and percentages.

Results

The first court ruling requiring parents to undergo the intervention of a parenting coordinator is [Judgment 602/2013 of July 26 of the Provincial Court of Barcelona](#), with Judge Pascual Ortúñoz as reporting judge. It was not until approximately one year later that the first ruling was issued in another autonomous community, namely [Judgment 691/2014 of July 15 of the Provincial Court of Madrid](#), with Judge M^a del Pilar González as reporting judge.

[Table 2](#) shows the results of the analysis of case law with regard to the judicial body and type of ruling, as well as its territorial distribution and how it has evolved year after year since that first ruling in 2013, up to the last of the analyzed in December 2024.

The data for the entire period are shown in [Table 3](#).

Provincial Court rulings predominate (93.8%), and judgments are more frequent than orders (81%). In terms of territorial distribution of judicial rulings, two autonomous communities stand out: Catalonia with 42.2% and the Valencian Community with 32.1%. Some distance behind are the Community of Madrid (7.5%), the Region of Murcia (5.9%), the Chartered Community of Navarre (3.9%), Castile-La Mancha (2.8%), and the Balearic Islands (2.8%). The lowest percentages are found in Andalusia (1.3%), Galicia (0.8%), and Aragon (0.3%). The sources of law on which the judicial rulings imposing parenting coordination are based can be seen in [Table 4](#).

Conclusions

After analyzing the court rulings that impose parenting coordination in Spain, we find that they are mostly judgments (rather than orders) and that they come from the Provincial Courts. This finding aligns with the inherent limitation of conducting the search through a case law database, which by definition includes rulings issued by collegiate courts, and therefore does not usually include first instance judgments.

Table 2
Judicial Body, Type of Ruling, and Territorial Distribution by Year

Year	No. of rulings	Judicial body and type of ruling	Province (order from + to -)	Autonomous Community (order from + to -)
2013	6	Provincial Court judgment=6	Barcelona=6	Catalonia=6
2014	12	Provincial Court judgment=11 Order of Provincial Court=1	Barcelona=11 Madrid=1	Catalonia=11 Community of Madrid=1
2015	14	High Court judgment=1 Provincial Court judgment=12 Order of Provincial Court=1	Barcelona=13 Madrid=1	Catalonia=13 Community of Madrid=1
2016	13	Provincial Court judgment =12 Order of Provincial Court =1	Barcelona=13	Catalonia=13
2017	18	High Court judgment=1 Provincial Court judgment=10 Order of Provincial Court =5 Judgment of First Instance Court=2	Barcelona=12 Lleida=2 Castellón=1 Coruña=1 Girona=1 Málaga=1	Catalonia=15 Andalusia=1 Valencian Community=1 Galicia=1
2018	27	High Court judgment=2 Provincial Court judgments=11 Order of Provincial Court=11 Judgment of First Instance Court=3	Barcelona=17 Valencia=3 Madrid=2 Castellón=1 Girona=1 Lleida=1 Tarragona=1 Zaragoza=1	Catalonia=20 Valencian Community=4 Community of Madrid=2 Aragon=1
2019	24	High Court judgment=2 Provincial Court judgments=14 Order of Provincial Court=7 Judgment of First Instance Court=1	Barcelona=12 Murcia=3 Alicante=2 Valencia=2 Girona=2 Lleida=2 Madrid=1	Catalonia=16 Valencian Community=4 Murcia Region=3 Community of Madrid=1
2020	42	Provincial Court judgment=32 Order of Provincial Court=9 Judgment of First Instance Court=1	Valencia=19 Barcelona=11 Madrid=4 Navarre=3 Coruña=2 Castellón=1 Girona=1 Balearic Islands=1	Valencian Community=20 Catalonia=12 Community of Madrid=4 Region of Navarre=3 Galicia=2 Balearic Islands=1
2021	77	High Court judgment=2 Provincial Court judgment=67 Provincial Court order=6 Judgment of First Instance Court=2	Valencia=34 Barcelona=18 Murcia=7 Girona=3 Madrid=3 Alicante=2 Ciudad Real=2 Navarre=2 Albacete=1 Almería=1 Castellón=1 Balearic Islands=1 Seville=1 Toledo=1	Valencian Community=37 Catalonia=21 Murcia Region=7 Castile-La Mancha=4 Community of Madrid=3 Andalusia=2 Region of Navarre=2 Balearic Islands=1
2022	58	High Court judgment=1 Provincial Court judgment=46 Provincial Court order=11	Valencia=15 Barcelona=9 Castellón=8 Madrid=6 Alicante=5 Balearic Islands=3 Murcia=3 Navarre=2 Tarragona=2 Ciudad Real=1 Cádiz=1 Girona=1 Lleida=1 Toledo=1	Valencian Community=28 Catalonia=13 Community of Madrid=6 Balearic Islands=3 Murcia Region=3 Castile-La Mancha=2 Region of Navarre=2 Andalusia=1

Year	No. of rulings	Judicial body and type of ruling	Province (order from + to -)	Autonomous Community (order from + to -)
2023	55	High Court judgment=1 Provincial Court judgment=47 Provincial Court order=7	Valencia=13 Barcelona=14 Murcia=8 Madrid=7 Balearic Islands=4 Navarre=4 Castellón=1 Guadalajara=1 Malaga=1 Tarragona=1 Toledo=1	Catalonia=15 Valencian Community=14 Murcia Region=8 Community of Madrid=7 Region of Navarre=4 Balearic Islands=4 Castile-La Mancha=2 Andalusia=1
2024	43	Provincial Court judgment =30 Provincial Court order=13	Valencia=12 Barcelona=8 Madrid=4 Navarre=4 Alicante=4 Ciudad Real=4 Balearic Islands=2 Murcia=2 Albacete=1 Castellón=1 Girona=1	Valencian Community=17 Catalonia=9 Castile-La Mancha=5 Community of Madrid=4 Region of Navarre=4 Balearic Islands=2 Murcia Region=2

Table 3

Type of Ruling, Judicial Body, and Territorial Distribution for the Entire Period Analyzed (2013-2024)

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Type of judicial ruling	Judgment	317	81%
	Order	72	19%
Judicial body issuing the ruling	High Court of Justice	10	2.6%
	Provincial Court	370	93.8%
	Court of First Instance	9	2.3%
Territorial distribution	Catalonia	164	42.2%
	Valencia Community	125	32.1%
	Madrid Community	29	7.5%
	Murcia Region	23	5.9%
	Region of Navarre	15	3.9%
	Castile-La Mancha	13	3.3%
	Balearic Islands	11	2.8%
	Andalusia	5	1.3%
	Galicia	3	0.8%
	Aragon	1	0.3%

Analysis of the territorial origin of the case law has shown that parenting coordination agreed upon in court rulings is carried out primarily in Catalonia—the autonomous community where it was introduced in 2013—and the Valencian Community, both of which lead by a wide margin with 42% and 32% respectively.

It was to be expected that Catalonia, where the introduction of parenting coordination began with the first ruling in 2013, would continue to be the autonomous community in Spain with the most court rulings, although we can see that the Valencian Community, where the first ruling did not appear until four years later, surpassed it in number of rulings in 2020, 2021, 2022, and 2024. This data can be better explained if we take into account that, after carrying out a successful pilot project in the courts of Valencia, the Official College of Psychology of the Valencian Community scheduled specialized training in parenting coordination and drew up a list of professionals trained to practice it, as Catalonia had done in its day. This set of circumstances encouraged legal practitioners to become aware of the usefulness of parenting coordination, which shows how harmony between the administration of justice and public institutions helps to advance and implement appropriate ways of addressing post-breakup interparental conflict.

With regard to the other autonomous communities, there are fewer court rulings in the Community of Madrid (7.5%), the Region of Murcia (5.9%), the Chartered Community of Navarre (3.9%), Castile-La Mancha (3.3%), the Balearic Islands (2.8%), and Andalusia (1.3%). These are the autonomous communities where this role has been introduced most recently. It is important to note that both the Community of Madrid and the Chartered Community of Navarre have free public services to which the courts can refer families, which undoubtedly facilitates this process.

Finally, Galicia (0.8%) and Aragon (0.3%) are the autonomous communities with the lowest percentages. In both, parenting coordination appears to have been discontinued, as no court rulings appear in Galicia after 2020, and Aragón has only one from 2018.

The role of the official psychology associations should be highlighted, as it has been shown that in the autonomous communities where the most court rulings have been found, there are lists of professional parenting coordinators, whereas currently there are none in either the official psychology association of Galicia or that of Aragon—or at least they are not listed on their websites (Tejedor et al., 2025). This circumstance reinforces the connection between the professional practice of psychology and its

Table 4
Sources of law on Which Judicial Rulings are Based

Source of law	Article
Spanish Constitution	Art. 39 and Art. 10.1
Spanish Civil Code	Art. 158
Organic Law 1/1996 of January 15 on the Legal Protection of Minors	Explanatory memorandum First Additional Provision
Law 1/2000 of January 7 on Civil Procedure	241; 335; 341; 748 to 755 and 770
Statute of Autonomy of Catalonia (2006)	Art. 17
Catalan Civil Code (Law 25/2010 of July 29 (Book II of the Civil Code of Catalonia))	211.6.1; 233-8.3; 233-10; 233-13.1; 236-3; 236-4.1; 236-6; 236-13 Sixth Additional Provision Seventh Additional Provision
Law 14/2010 of May 27 on the rights and opportunities of children and adolescents	12.2
Declaration of the Rights of the Child (1989)	Art. 3.1 and Art. 9.3
Recommendation 19/2006 of the Committee of Ministers to Member States on policies to support positive parenting.	
CASE LAW	
European	ECHR of June 22, 2006 (Bianchi v. Switzerland) ECHR of September 2, 2010 (Mincheva v. Bulgaria) ECHR judgment of January 29, 2013 (Lombardo v. Italy) ECHR of November 12, 2019 (Petithory Lanzmann v. France)
National	Constitutional Court Ruling 4/2001 of January 15 Constitutional Court Ruling 58/2008 of April 28 Constitutional Court Ruling 185/2012 of October 17
Regional	STSJC [Judgment of the High Court of Catalonia] 11/2015 of February 26 STSJC [Judgment of the High Court of Catalonia] 1/2017 of January 12 STSJC [Judgment of the High Court of Catalonia] 49/2021 of September 30 STSJC [Judgment of the High Court of Catalonia] 62/2023 of October 26

consideration in the administration of justice. Thus, support from professional bodies—not only for working groups but also for compiling and publishing lists of professionals—visibilizes and strengthens this professional role. There is no doubt that these are the appropriate entities to accredit professionals trained in parenting coordination, as the General Council of the Spanish Psychological Association has been doing in recent years with other specialties.

This study provides a map of the very uneven territorial distribution of the implementation of parenting coordination. It can be seen that there is case law in just over half of the Spanish autonomous communities (10 out of 17) and that, as has been pointed out, it is largely confined to those autonomous communities where projects have been carried out or where parenting coordination services are offered. A separate case is the autonomous community of Aragon, where one of the first pilot projects was carried out, and where there has been no positive evolution in court rulings.

On the other hand, it should be noted that court rulings were not included from other autonomous communities where the

professionals surveyed by [Tejedor et al. \(2025\)](#) stated that they carried out parenting coordination, such as Asturias, Cantabria, Castile and León, the Canary Islands, and La Rioja. Therefore, the fact that we did not have access to the court rulings of the family courts (first instance) may limit the possibility of showing a picture of territorial implementation that is more in line with the professional reports of the specialists who carry out this type of intervention.

It can be seen that until 2021 there was a progressive increase in court rulings, with that year seeing the highest number of rulings, after which, although rulings continue to be found, the trend is downward. This situation can be understood in light of the lack of support from certain public opinion groups and/or from insufficient political will.

It has been observed that court rulings appointing this role, in the absence of specific regulation, primarily rely on provisions in Article 39 of the Spanish Constitution, which establishes that public authorities must ensure the social, economic, and legal protection of the family, as well as the comprehensive protection of children. To a lesser extent, they draw on the free development of the personality (Article 10.1) of the children and adolescents involved in high-conflict breakups. Reference is often made to Article 158 of the Spanish Civil Code, empowering judges to order—in judgments handed down in family proceedings, in their enforcement, or in any other proceedings—specifically, the safeguards and guarantees deemed appropriate to ensure the effective compliance with personal measures concerning children in relation to custody arrangements or visitation and contact schedules. In general it enables the judge to adopt any other measures considered necessary to protect minors from danger or prevent harm within their family or social environment.

Additionally, rulings draw on supranational regulations and directives such as the Declaration of the Rights of the Child (1989), the European Charter of the Rights of the Child (1992), and Recommendation 19/2006 drawn up by the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe, whose objective is for States to recognize the importance of parental responsibility and the need for parents to have sufficient support to fulfill their responsibilities in the education and upbringing of their children.

The Spanish and Catalan Civil Codes, along with the Civil Procedure Law, also grant the courts broad discretion when it comes to taking measures to prevent harm to minors, including gaining an in-depth understanding of the family situation and making the most appropriate decisions based on the best interests of the child. These measures have usually involved the intervention of the court's technical advisory teams to assess or monitor the situation, as well as supervision by social services and referral to a family meeting point. These judgments hold that parenting coordination can be established under the same legal rationale and support, as referencing the aforementioned options does not exclude other resources or services, nor limit possibilities to those mentioned. Ultimately, case law—particularly from the High Court of Justice of Catalonia—stands out for supporting the imposition of parenting coordination ([Sentencia del TSJC 11/2015 de 26 de febrero](#); [Sentencia del TSJC 1/2017 de 12 de enero](#); [Sentencia del TSJC 49/2021 de 30 de septiembre](#); [Sentencia del TSJC 62/2023 de 26 de octubre](#)).

Judicial rulings that did not impose parenting coordination were excluded from the analysis because they did not meet the selection

criteria established in this study. Nevertheless, during the preliminary review, several judgments stood out that, while not imposing parenting coordination, did recommend it. These judgments deserve mention, as they reflect judicial sensitivity to promoting alternative dispute resolution mechanisms in family proceedings. For example: "if they continue to have difficulties in exercising their rights, they should resort to mediation, a parenting coordinator, or any other public or private institution that can help them reach agreements, in order to dejudicialize their relationship, since this would benefit their child by avoiding problems for the child and for themselves; all of this without prejudice to any measures they may need to request at the enforcement stage of the judgment" (*Sentencia AP Madrid 468/2014 de 13 de mayo*). Or this one: "To safeguard the best interests of Angustia and Juana, it is of vital importance that mother and father move beyond their individual, mutually opposing positions, which lead to confrontation, towards another way of managing differences in perception and communication, overcoming past grievances and focusing on the future; this is not the function of the courts, however the necessary advice, recommendations, or behavioral guidelines that they will often need can be obtained by consulting a professional in the field of family therapy (parenting coordinator) rather than through rigid confrontation in judicial proceedings" (*Sentencia de la AP de Barcelona 546/2016 de 8 de julio de 2016*).

The incorporation of parenting coordination into the Spanish judicial system validates the essential role of psychosocial professionals in the management of complex family conflicts. Their recognition as auxiliary figures in the court reinforces a more comprehensive and restorative model of justice, focused on the best interests of minors and the prevention of emotional harm to children and young people.

From the analysis carried out, we can conclude that the progression and expansion of parenting coordination in Spain is slow and incomplete. A decade after the first court rulings that established it, we are still waiting for it to be legally regulated, an aspect that undoubtedly slows down its further expansion. At the same time, Spain has a substantial body of case law, particularly from the Provincial Court of Barcelona and the High Court of Justice of Catalonia, which considers parenting coordination to be a valid and appropriate tool for pacifying interparental conflict in highly contentious separations and divorces that harm children.

Finally, as mentioned above, this study has limitations due to the nature of the case law data analyzed. The search was conducted exclusively in the database of the Judicial Documentation Center (CENDOJ), which collects rulings issued by collegiate courts. This means that first-instance court rulings are scarcely included, limiting both territorial representativeness and the quantitative scope, as more judicial resolutions exist than analyzed—many are not appealed, so Provincial Courts are unaware of them, leaving no trace of the original proceedings in the database. This may affect the exhaustiveness of the material analyzed. Another limitation is that the analysis focused exclusively on the Spanish context, so its results must be interpreted within the socio-legal particularities of this country, as no comparative analysis with other legal systems was conducted—an approach that might have broadened understanding of the phenomenon and contributed insights from other implementation experiences.

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Conflict of Interest

The authors have no conflict of interest.

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