

## Introduction

Mediation is a confidential service that brings parents together with a mediator to work on solving their parenting differences in a positive way. The parents' role as the decision makers, when it comes to their children's future, is very important to this process. Taking part in the decision-making has positive and lasting results for parents and children. Parents are more likely to stay with a parenting plan they have created together, instead of one that is decided for them by the Court.

Research indicates that the successful adjustment of children during times of family-related stress is directly related to two factors:

- the level of cooperation between parents
- the continued involvement of both parents in their lives

Mediation, therefore, encourages participants to see themselves as the co-parents who share in the responsibility of their children's future care.

## What to Expect

The main goal of mediation is for parents to work together to find a solution to their

parenting disputes. The mediator tries to help parents to see beyond their personal feelings and focus on the interests and needs of their children.

The mediator may provide educational information about:

- the needs of children at different stages in their development
- other ways to solve the parents' issues
- the court process

The role of the mediator is to provide a neutral, supportive environment while keeping in mind the importance of the children's relationships with both parents. The main focus of the meetings is on the best interests of the children, while also considering the needs and wants of the parents. Parents are encouraged to discuss their opinions about the children's needs to try to find positive, successful solutions to their parenting concerns.

## How it Works

Mediation offered by CSSD-Family Services is a free service that parents can use either through a referral from the Court or at the direct request of both parents. Family Services will review all requests and referrals before the start of mediation to decide if

this is the best way to solve the parents' differences and to make sure that it is safe for the two parents to meet together.

To keep the parents' main role as the decision-makers in this process, only the parents and the mediator(s) take part in the mediation. It is possible to have up to three, 2-hour mediation sessions in all.

Mediation is a confidential service; therefore, what is said during the sessions is not discussed with attorneys or others. There are exceptions to this that the Family Relations Counselor will tell you about in the first session.

If you reach an agreement during the mediation, the terms of that agreement are given to the Court, the parents, and all attorneys involved in the case. If the Court orders it, the agreement becomes legally binding on you. If you do not reach an agreement during the mediation, a report is given to the Court with that information.

Even if you do not come to an agreement, the mediation process is still valuable. Parents learn about different parenting plans, the developmental needs of their children, and what the Court expects them to do for their children.

Parenting plans may change several times

over the years for a number of reasons. If parents need more help in mediating issues about their child in the future, they may contact the Court Support Services Division - Family Services.

## Tips for Success

Your participation and cooperation throughout the mediation process is necessary. It is very important that you cooperate with the Family Services mediator in the following ways:

1. Keep scheduled appointments and arrive on time for all meetings.
2. Do not bring children with you to the mediation sessions, unless the mediator tells you to.
3. Stay open to suggestions and ideas that might be different from your own.
4. Listen to what everyone has to say.
5. Share your opinions and concerns in a way that shows respect for everyone in the process.

**For more information, contact your local Court Support Services Division - Family Services Office. Contact information is available at the Superior Court – Court Service Center.**

## Connecticut Judicial Branch

## Court Support Services Division Family Services



For more information, you may go to the  
Judicial Branch website at:  
[www.jud.ct.gov](http://www.jud.ct.gov)



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## Mediation