



## What is Juvenile Dependency Mediation?

**Dependency Mediation Program** is an informal and confidential process in which the parents, social workers, attorneys, and other people in a case meet with an impartial person (the mediator).

The mediator helps the parties explore ways to resolve differences and make a plan that everybody agrees is safe and best for the child, as well as safe for all of the involved adults.

Mediation is an opportunity for you to help decide what is best for your family. The mediator does not make decisions for the people in mediation and will not make any recommendations to the court.

### You can consult with your attorney at any time.

Be sure to ask as many questions as necessary so that you understand what is expected of you and what you can expect from your social worker and the Court.

Your Mediation Appointment  
has been scheduled for:

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Time: \_\_\_\_\_

Place: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Please plan on arriving 10 minutes  
before the appointment time.

## What You Should Know About: Juvenile Dependency Mediation



## Who Participates in Mediation?

Mediation usually includes the parents, social workers, attorneys, CASA, as well as other people involved in the case.

Children may also participate in one form or another if they are of an appropriate age, if it is likely to be helpful, and if the child's attorney agrees.

## Mediation Procedure

At the beginning of the appointment, the mediator will meet with you to answer questions and explain the mediation process. The mediator will then speak with the attorneys, social workers, and others present to discuss the case and identify legal issues.

At some point during the process, it is likely that all of the participants will meet together in the same room. Throughout the process, the mediator will meet with various groups of people to help them share their ideas and problem solve. The goal is for everybody to come up with a plan that is safe and best for the child, as well as safe for the family members.

If the parties come to some agreement, the mediator will write this down and have everyone sign it. Agreements become court orders when signed by the Judicial Officer. In the alternative, the agreement may be placed on the court record by the Judicial Officer. Even if you have reached a mediated agreement, you will still attend your next court hearing. If there is no agreement, the case moves on to the previously scheduled court date for the Judicial Officer's decision.

## Confidentiality & Exceptions

Confidentiality in Dependency Mediation means that no one can tell the Juvenile Dependency Court Judge or Master what was said in mediation, except to report who attended and the areas of agreement. It also means that people in the mediation should not talk to anyone outside of the mediation about what was said, unless everyone agrees that this should happen. Notes taken in the mediation session will be collected by the mediator.

The following things are NOT confidential, and require that the proper authorities be informed:

- The agreement reached in mediation that goes to the Judicial Officer for signature;
- If the mediator reasonably suspects a new act of abuse or neglect (child or elder) has happened;
- If anyone threatens to harm self or others.

There may be other circumstances where information may not be confidential (including if a criminal case is pending, or filed at a later date.) Consult with your attorney prior to participating in mediation if there is a related criminal matter or investigation in process.

## Who are the Mediators?

All of the JDMP mediators are formally trained in dependency mediation. They come from different professions and have an understanding of the Nevada child welfare system, the dynamics of conflict, and cultural considerations. Their job is to facilitate conversation in a safe, informal environment, empowering participants to find satisfactory solutions.

## Issues Discussed in Mediation

Some of the issues talked about in mediation are:

- Wording of Allegations (petition language)
- Reunification Plans
- Placement Options
- Custody and Visitation Plans
- Expectations
- Services for children and parents, such as:
  - » individual and/or family counseling
  - » drug testing
  - » substance abuse treatment
  - » parenting and/or domestic violence classes

Throughout the mediation session, the focus will be on what the child's needs are, what parents will do, and what social services can do.

## Preparing for the Appointment

To prepare for the mediation appointment you can talk with your attorney about the issues you would like to bring up, think about what is best for your child, and be open to considering different ideas.

