

Responsibilities of Separated Parents

INCLUDE:

- Developing a workable plan that gives children access to both parents. If you want the respect and love of your children, you must allow them to respect and love the other parent. This means encouraging visitation with the other parent.
- Reassuring children they can still count on both parents, and relatives on both sides.
- Avoid the temptation to turn children against the other parent. This is cruel and thoughtless and results in a loss of respect by the child for both parents.
- Keeping on-going contact with the children so they do not feel rejected or abandoned.
- Providing and maintaining telephone contact with the children.
- Having children ready on time for the other parent.
- Being home to receive the children on time.
- Calling the other parent when it is necessary to be late.
- Rarely cancelling plans with children.
- Keeping parental communication lines open to constructively resolve problems concerning the children.

- Each parent establishing a home for the children with a place for their belongings (clothes, books, toys, etc.).



DO NOT INCLUDE:

- Pumping children for information about the other parent.
- Trying to control the other parent.
- Using the children to deliver child support payments.
- Arguing in front of the children.
- Speaking derogatorily about the other parent.
- Asking the children with whom they want to live.
- Putting the children in the position of having to take sides.
- Using the children as pawns to hurt the other parent.

Persons with disabilities needing a special accommodation to participate in mediation should contact the office at 813.272.5642.



Administrative Office of the Courts



FAMILY DIVERSION



Makes the Connection!

13th Judicial Circuit
Edgecomb Building, Room 208
800 E. Twiggs Street,
Tampa, FL 33602
phone: 813.272.5642
fax: 813.301.3705
Hours 8:00AM - 5:00PM

What is Family Diversion?

Family Diversion is your alternative to formal court proceedings involving certain family matters. If you are divorced, separated, or responsible for children born out of wedlock, and you have a complaint involving:

time sharing	alimony payments
child support	medical payments
	personal property

the staff of Family Diversion will assist you in resolving these issues by scheduling a mediation hearing.



What is Mediation?

"Mediation is a process whereby a neutral third party acts to encourage and facilitate the resolution of a dispute without prescribing what it should be".*

*Study Commission on Dispute Resolution

During a mediation hearing, a Florida Supreme Court certified, professional Mediator assists you and the other involved party in reaching a mutually satisfactory agreement. After the mediation hearing, your agreement is submitted to a Family Law Judge for review and it is incorporated into a Court Order.

If your complaint cannot be resolved through Family Diversion, you always have the option of going to court or seeking relief through another appropriate agency.

Mediation is not intended to be a substitute for legal counsel. The mediator may not give legal advice, and each parent is encouraged to consult with his/her attorney when any legal questions arise.

Who can use Mediation?

Parties may voluntarily request pre-judgment or post-judgment mediation if experiencing difficulty with the issues of parental time sharing, child support, medical payments, and/or personal property; OR, the court can order pre-judgment or post-judgment mediation of these issues at anytime during the court proceedings.

Mediation is inappropriate if the case is currently being investigated for child abuse.

What are the Benefits of Mediation?

- Mediation costs are significantly less than litigation expenses.
- There is an emphasis on cooperative rather than competitive conflict resolution.
- It helps parents determine time sharing arrangements that best meet the emotional and social needs of their family.
- The mediation hearings are scheduled within a much shorter period of time than regular court hearings.
- All communication in mediation proceedings is confidential and inadmissible as evidence in any subsequent legal or criminal proceedings, unless both parties agree otherwise.
- Pre-judgment agreements are incorporated into the final judgment.
- Post-judgment agreements can be incorporated into court orders without a court hearing.

