

## Tips for Successful Mediation

- ◆ **Parenting Education**  
Attend the PACT class before attending mediation.
- ◆ **Follow the Court Order**  
Contact the mediator to schedule an appointment.
- ◆ **Arrive 5 minutes early**  
Be respectful of the mediator's time and both parents' time. Many parents are required to take off work to attend mediation.
- ◆ **Have an open mind**  
Mediation is about your personal input and will require negotiation by both parents.
- ◆ **Arrive alone**  
Do not bring anyone with you to mediation.
- ◆ **Be polite**  
Communicate in a respectful manner.
- ◆ **Financial issues**  
Are not to be addressed in mediation without a Court Order.
- ◆ **Focus on the present and the future - not the past.**

It is a myth that parents who could not get along as partners cannot work together as parents.

They can!

### How do I prepare for mediation?

It is important to keep an open mind and a positive attitude about the mediation process. Some things to keep in mind are:

- ◆ What your children need;
- ◆ What is best for your children;
- ◆ What are you willing to do to see that your children's needs are met;
- ◆ Willingness to listen, think of many options and consider which options best meet your children's needs.

If you have concerns for your physical safety, inform your lawyer and the mediator. Mediation should be a process in which all parties feel safe.

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## Benefits of Mediation



**Winnebago and  
Boone Counties  
Court-Referred  
Family Mediation**

## Mediation is a confidential process that brings parents together with a mediator to work on solving their parenting differences in a positive way.

### ***As you consider a parenting plan...***

- ◆ How will you create a healthy two home family system for your children?
- ◆ How will you resolve the complex issues that will shape your children's lives?
- ◆ How can you focus on your children's needs while developing a workable parenting plan?

When children are involved, the parents' relationship needs to be changed so that effective parenting continues even though the parties' relationship has ended. Mediation allows and encourages the parties to separate from each other in a positive and responsible way, while protecting the children in the process.

### **How mediation works**

A trained mediator guides you through the process of working together to reach an agreement. Together you define your children's needs and goals for their future.

### **Costs of mediation**

Each mediator has his or her own fee schedule. The court will assess the percentage each parent will pay and will include the information in the Court Order.

### **The mediator will help you:**

- ◆ Clarify the issues.
- ◆ Identify possible options.
- ◆ Develop a parenting plan that will work for you.

### **Mediation benefits parents:**

Parents negotiate settlements themselves instead of having decisions imposed on them by the court.

The process often requires less time and will incur less cost than contesting matters in court.

Mediation focuses on the decisions to be made rather than on the emotional aspect of the separation of the parties.

### **Mediation benefits children:**

When parents cooperate, the children have a better chance for a secure and satisfying life.

Parents can prepare children for the changes that will occur.

### ***If parents go out of their way to work together even when they feel angry:***

- ◆ They ease the hurt for children.
- ◆ Children can feel free to love both parents.
- ◆ Children are protected from adult issues.
- ◆ Children have continued involvement of both parents in their lives.

### **How much time does mediation take?**

The time needed in mediation varies according to the complexity of the issues and the attitudes of the parties. Most couples reach an agreement in less than 3 hours. Court-referred mediations will require a minimum of three hours.

### **Will you need an attorney?**

The mediator cannot and will not give legal advice. The mediator will refer each client to his/her attorney to discuss legal issues that arise during mediation.

The mediator will provide a Memorandum of Understanding based upon the agreement of the parties, which they may take to their respective attorneys. The attorneys will review the Memorandum, give advice and opinions, and draft a formal order to submit to the court, or the Memorandum of Understanding will be given directly to the court. When your agreement is submitted to the judge, the court will determine remaining unresolved issues.

### **How is a mediator selected?**

The resumé and fee schedule of each court-approved mediator is available in each Winnebago County Family Courtroom, and in Boone County Circuit Clerk's Office.

Both parents, with the assistance of your attorneys, will agree on the selection of a mediator from this list.