

Brooklyn Mediation Center
210 Joralemon Street, Rm. 618

Brooklyn, NY 11201
T: 718.834.6671
F: 718.834.6681

Manhattan Mediation Center
111 John Street, Rm. 600

New York, NY 10038
T: 212.577.1740
F: 212.577.1748



www.nypeace.org; info@nypeace.org

THE CO-PARENTING MEDIATION PROGRAM

MEDIATION

The goal of the program is to help parents who live separately develop strategies that will work for them and their child, now and in the future. Mediation helps parents craft a parenting plan for scheduling, decision-making and financial arrangements for their child.

Mediation provides an opportunity to talk through core parenting issues with help from professionals, to reach a mutually agreeable plan that meets everyone's needs. Studies demonstrate that mediation helps prevent future friction regarding the care of children.

The parenting mediation program runs for 2 or 3 sessions, each between 2 to 3 hours in length. Clients can return to mediation to modify their plans should any issues arise later.

PROGRAM BENEFITS

- Free** -- Mediation and drafting services are offered without cost to participants.
- Empowering** -- Parents can discuss the issues and create their solutions together
- Durable** -- People reaching joint agreements can honor their plan, because it meets each of their particular needs and is realistic for both of them.
- Private** -- Information shared in mediation is protected from use as evidence in court. Nothing said in mediation will be shared by the New York Peace Institute, except if informed of a child in danger.

FAMILY COURT

New York Peace Institute does not mediate cases that are pending in Family Court.

Agreements made through mediation are voluntary, but if parents desire an enforceable court order, they may file a petition after the mediation asking the Family Court to accept the determinations they reached.

Parents with a previous court order are welcome to mediate modifications outside of court. Mediated changes can be followed informally by the parents, or an enforceable alteration obtained by the parents filing a modification petition in Family Court.

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

New York Peace Institute does not mediate cases with a history of domestic violence or abuse. All cases are screened, and may be referred out for appropriate services.

LEGAL COUNSEL

Clients can speak to an attorney before mediation, or at any time during the process -- including prior to signing a written agreement. Attorneys are able to participate in the mediation process, if acceptable to both parents.

TOPICS ADDRESSED IN MEDIATION

Decision-Making

Parents must determine how major decisions will be made for their child, such as education, medical decisions, and religious practice. Possibilities include:

- **Joint decision-making:** Parents work together to reach agreement.
- **Consultation on decisions:** Parents discuss issues, but one finalizes the choice.
- **Particularized decisions:** Each parent has responsibility for certain areas.
- **Sole decision-making:** One parent has the responsibility for making major decisions.

Parenting Time

Parents need a schedule for parenting time:

- Where will the child spend time and sleep during school week and weekends?
- How will parents celebrate school breaks, birthdays and holidays?
- How can transfers between parents be handled most smoothly?

Communication

- When and how will it be best for the parents to communicate about their child?
- How can school and medical information be shared?
- How should disagreements be handled so that a child is not caught in the middle?

Relationships with Others

- Should special time with relatives be scheduled in the plan for the child?
- How should new partners be introduced to the child?

Changes to the Parenting Plan

- How can temporary changes be worked out?
- How will the parents handle long-term schedule changes?
- What if one parent is interested in relocating a major distance away?

Child Support

- How will both parents meet the everyday needs of their child?
- How can they deal with large expenses, such as health-care costs, education, extra-curricular activities, and day-care costs?
- How should parents plan to make adjustments if their incomes change in the future?

Child Support Arrears

- How should the parents negotiate the arrears?
- Can the parents work together to set realistic child support payments?
- Are there other co-parenting conflicts, such as scheduled time with the children and improved communication that can also be addressed?

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REFERRALS

New York Peace Institute accepts referrals from agencies as well as direct inquiries from individuals. To refer a case or discuss if mediation might be appropriate, contact the Program Manager, JoAn Pangilinan Taylor, at jptaylor@nypeace.org, or at 212.577.1740.