

Brooklyn Mediation Center
210 Joralemon Street, Rm. 618
Brooklyn, NY 11201
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www.nypeace.org

Manhattan Mediation Center
Moved to 111 John Street, Rm. 600
New York, NY 10038
T: 212.577.1740
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PARENT PLEDGE MEDIATION

The goal of this mediation program is to help parents living separately to develop a parenting plan that will work for them, now and in the future. Mediation can assist with developing or revising a parenting plan, also known as a custody and visitation agreement, and/or a child support agreement.

In mediation, clients can address any topics that are important and relevant to their unique circumstances. Mediation is an opportunity to work through some of the core issues, with help from the professional mediators, and reach a mutually agreeable parenting plan that really meets everyone's needs. Evidence demonstrates that mediation will help prevent future difficulties regarding to the care of the child or children.

Typically, parenting plan mediations take 2-3 sessions, each up to 2-3 hours in length. Clients can decide to return to mediation at any point to modify their plans or should any conflict arise in the future. Mediation is:

FREE Professional services are offered at no cost to clients & community partners.

EMPOWERING With the help of mediators, parents can discuss their situation and create solutions together.

DURABLE When people reach an agreement together, they usually stick to that plan because it meets their needs and is realistic for them.

PRIVATE Information shared in a mediation is legally protected and cannot be used as evidence in any court. Nothing said in mediation will be shared outside of New York Peace Institute by mediators or staff, unless we hear about any child in danger.

REFERRALS

New York Peace Institute accepts referrals from agencies and also directly from individuals. To refer a case or discuss if mediation may be appropriate, please contact Program Manager Annie Noula at anoula@nypeace.org and 212.577.1740.

FAMILY COURT & MEDIATION

New York Peace Institute does *not* mediate cases that are active and pending in the Family Court. The only exception is for cases filed at the Harlem Community Justice Center – the Judge can refer to mediation from HCJC.

Agreements made in mediation are voluntary. If the parents desire a formal enforceable court order for custody, visitation or child support, they may file a petition in the Family Court after mediation. It would be up to the Court and to the Judge to accept the recommendations parents present through their mediation agreement.

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Parents with a previous court order are welcome to mediate modifications outside of court. Mediated modifications can be maintained informally and voluntarily between the parents. Alternatively, for an enforceable order, parents may file a modification petition in Family Court after mediation and present their new agreement as a recommendation to the Judge on their case.

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

New York Peace Institute does not mediate cases with any history of domestic violence or abuse between (ex-)intimate partners. All cases will be 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 mediation process, including prior to signing a written agreement. Attorneys are able to participate in mediation at the agreement of all parties.

SAMPLE TOPICS IN PARENT PLEDGE MEDIATION

- Decision-Making (also called “Legal Custody”)**

Day-to-day decisions are often made by the parent caring for the child in the moment. Parents must consider how other major decisions should be made, such as education, religion, and medical decisions. A few arrangements are most common:

 - **Sole decision-making:** One parent has authority for making major decisions.
 - **Split decision-making:** Each parent has final authority in certain areas.
 - **Joint decision-making:** Parents have to reach an agreement about all major decisions.

- Parenting Time (also called “Visitation”)**

“Visitation” refers to the time the child spends with the non-custodial parent, meaning the parent who spends less than 50% of the time with the child. Even parents who spend equal time with the child will need a schedule for parenting time.

 - Where will the child regularly spend his/her time?
 - How will they share special times, like school vacations, birthdays and holidays?
 - How do they handle vacations?
 - How do they handle pick-ups and drop-offs (also called “transfer”)?
 - How will they handle it when someone is late?
 - How will they handle it if someone cancels a visit?
 - How will they handle conflicts with the parenting schedule?
 - When a holiday falls on a scheduled visit, which takes priority?

- Communication**
 - When and how will they communicate?
 - How will they share school and medical information?
 - What kind of notification do they need from the other parent?
 - How do they handle disagreements so that their child is not caught in the middle?
 - How, and how often, will the child be in contact with the parent who is not there?

- Child’s Relationships with Other People**
 - Do they want to schedule separate visiting time with relatives? Or should this be included in the regular parenting schedule?
 - How will they handle relationships with new partners?

- Changes to the Parenting Plan**
 - How will they handle temporary changes?
 - How will they handle long term schedule changes?
 - What if one parent wants to move in the future (also called “relocation”)?
 - How will they handle future disagreements?

- Child Support**