

EASY READER BROCHURE FAMILY LAW MEDIATION

What is Family Law Mediation?

Family Court Services is a division of the court that handles mediation for child custody and visitation issues. Upon separation, parents need to make important decisions: How will the children spend time with their parents? Where will the children live? Parents who are unable to agree on these decisions are required to meet with a mediator before a court appearance.

Why is mediation required?

The law requires parents to try mediation before the case goes to court. Generally, parents know the needs of their children better than anyone. Decisions made through mediation usually last over time. However, if mediation fails, the judge will decide a custody and visitation plan.

Who participates in mediation?

BOTH parents must participate in mediation. Mediators will not see one parent without the other. Children eight years of age and older are also required to attend.

What do mediators do?

A mediator meets with both parents and helps them to devise a plan that is best for the children. Although mediators are mental health counselors, mediation is not counseling.

Who provides mediation services?

Mediators are employees of the court who have a Master's degree in counseling, social work or psychology. Mediators have experience working with families to resolve conflicts, and they have specialized knowledge of the needs of children.

How long does mediation take?

Mediations are conducted by appointment during business hours in Bakersfield, Delano, Shafter, Ridgecrest and Mojave. The time required for mediation varies, but most sessions last one hour.

How are appointments made?

Appointments are required for mediation. In Bakersfield, call Family Court Services at (661) 868-4530 to schedule an appointment. Regional courts in Delano, Shafter, Ridgecrest and Mojave offer mediation on-site. Contact the Family Law Clerk at the regional court to make an appointment, using the listing of telephone numbers included at the end of this brochure.

Is mediation confidential?

Yes, with a few exceptions, which are explained at the time of mediation.

Is mediation available in Spanish?

Bilingual English/Spanish mediators are available in Bakersfield, Delano and Shafter. Mention the need for bilingual services when scheduling an appointment.

What happens after mediation?

After mediation, the case is heard by a judge. The mediated agreement becomes a court order when the judge signs it. If a mediated settlement has not been reached, the judge will make a decision based upon the facts of the case and discussion with both parents.

IMPORTANT TELEPHONE NUMBERS

(661) 868-5393	Kern County Superior Court
(661) 868-4530	Family Court Services (Mediation) - Bakersfield
(661) 746-	Family Law Clerk – Shafter
(661) 720-	Family Law Clerk – Delano
(760) 384-5988	Family Law Clerk – Ridgecrest
(661) 824-7064	Family Law Clerk – Mojave
(661) 868-4815	Family Law Facilitator’s Office
(661) 868-4885	Guardianship / Probate

More information is also available on these websites:

www.co.kern.ca.us/courts	Kern County Superior Court
www.courtinfo.ca.gov	Administrative Office of the Courts Self-Help Site