

Where are mediations held?

Mediations are held at
D.C. Superior Court
515 5th Street, N.W.
Washington D.C.

Court Building A, Room 114,
Telephone number: **202-879-1549**

Directions: Walking—Corner of 5th & E Walk towards 4th & F Street. Make a left into the courtyard. Entrance to court building A is located at the center of the building.

Directions: By Metro—Red Line to Judiciary Square. Take the Building Museum exit from the station. Turn left off the escalator. Court building A is directly to your left.

Do not bring children to mediation.

The DC Courts have a daycare center that will assist you if your child is at least two years of age and able to use the restroom without assistance. For more information about the Court's daycare center, please call phone 202-879-1759 or visit the web page www.dccourts.gov/dccourts/superior/special_ops/childcare_center.jsp

Notes:



Tips for a Successful Mediation

- Arrive 15 minutes early.
- Talk with your attorney.
- Do not bring children.
- Dress comfortably.
- Bring a snack.

For more program information contact:

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Child Protection Mediation



Jeannie M. Adams, Division Director

What is child protection mediation?

Child protection mediation is a free service scheduled by the court for parents to have an opportunity to express their views about the case (with the advice of an attorney) and to hear the views of the social workers, the child's attorney, and the government. Mediation is an opportunity for all parties to process the issues and collectively to resolve the situation in a private informal confidential setting away from the courtroom.



What are the goals of mediation?

The goals of mediation are to provide an efficient process for the resolution of disputes; to provide an effective process (one that yields good solutions with high compliance rates) in order to protect children and preserve families; to develop early comprehensive service agreements; to have an in-depth exchange of case information that will enable families to work together more effectively; and to increase all participants' satisfaction with the process and outcomes.

How can mediation help me?

Mediation helps families heal. Mediation is an alternative to the unpredictability and emotional trauma of trial. Mediation is a unique opportunity for you to talk with the lawyers and social workers about your family, to express your concerns, to seek services, and to talk about methods of resolving your case. Mediation is an opportunity for you to learn more about why the decisions were made that affect your family.

What is the role of the mediator?

The role of the mediator is to create the best opportunity for everyone involved in your case to leave mediation with a better understanding of the needs of your children, your family and the government. The mediator will ensure that every participant has a full opportunity to discuss his or her interests. The discussion can include any the following: the health and developmental progress of your children, parenting styles, visitation, custody, family services assessments and ways of resolving the legal case.

What to expect at mediation...

On the day of mediation you and all parties in your case (except children) will have set aside at least 3 hours to meet in a private mediation room to talk about how this case has affected your family. You will be able to ask questions about your case and hear the thoughts of everyone involved. The attorney representing the DC Office of the Attorney General will present to you and your attorney a written proposal of how he/she would like to settle your case. The written proposal is referred to as the stipulation. With the advice of your attorney, you can agree with this proposal or recommend your own proposal of how the case can be resolved. **Note:** stipulating at mediation is voluntary, it is just one of three possible ways of resolving your case. Your attorney will advise you further about your options.

What to expect after mediation...

You should know more about the well being of your children, what will happen next in your case and who will help you. If your mediation results in a signed stipulation you and all parties will appear before a judge (on the same day) for judicial acceptance. If a stipulation is not signed you may leave mediation. The attorneys will remain to complete a Joint Pre-Trial Statement.

Who are the mediators?

Mediators are members of the community or court staff who have received a minimum of 65 hours of specialized training in child protection mediation. In addition to specialized training, many of the mediators have advanced degrees in areas such as social work, education, law, psychology, human resources and other related fields. To remain in excellent standing with the program, mediators must pass periodic performance evaluations and attend additional trainings annually.



Is mediation confidential?

Mediation is confidential in nature and the mediators are neutral; they do not take sides, give advice, or render decisions. Everyone participating must sign an **Agreement to Mediate** stating that they agree not to use information learned through mediation in a court proceeding, not to subpoena the mediator to testify on behalf of anyone, and to mediate in good faith. Exceptions to confidentiality are: new allegations of child abuse, threats of harm, and any potential written agreement resulting from the mediation.

Is mediation successful?

Yes, program survey data continue to show that 57% of families reach a full agreement and 38% reach a partial agreement. More importantly, 95% of all participants report that mediation was helpful in considering different ways to look at and/or settle the dispute, and that overall they were very satisfied with the mediator and the mediation process.

