

2. Do not bring children with you to the meetings unless the Family Relations Counselor tells you to.
3. Be open to suggestions and ideas that might be different from your own.
4. Listen to what everyone has to say.
5. Share your opinions and concerns in a way that shows respect for everyone in the process.

Contact Information:

To learn more about the Magistrate Mediation Program, please contact CSSD-Family Services at 860-706-5170.

Family Relations Counselors are available in the Hartford Magistrate Court Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays from 9:00 a.m. until 1:00 p.m. They are also available in the Family Services Office at Hartford Superior Court, 90 Washington Street, 3rd Floor, Hartford.

The Judicial Branch of the State of Connecticut complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). If you need a reasonable accommodation in accordance with the ADA, contact an ADA contact person listed at www.jud.ct.gov/ADA/.

For more information, you may go to the Judicial Branch website at:

www.jud.ct.gov



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Connecticut Judicial Branch

Court Support Services Division

Family Services

Hartford Magistrate Mediation Program



Introduction

The Family Services Magistrate Mediation Program is a voluntary, confidential service available only to parents who have a case in the Hartford Family Support Magistrate Court. Mediation encourages parents to work together and share in the responsibility of their children's future care. Taking part in this decision making process can have positive and lasting results for parents and children.

What to Expect

The main goal of the mediation process is for parents to solve their parenting disputes in a way they both agree to. The mediator tries to help parents see beyond their personal feelings and focus on the interests and needs of their children.

The mediator may provide educational information about:

- the needs of children at different stages in their development
- other ways to solve the parents' concerns
- the court process

The role of the mediator is to provide a neutral, supportive environment while

keeping in mind the importance of the children's relationship with both parents. The focus of mediation is always the best interests of the children, while also considering the needs and wants of each parent. Parents are encouraged to discuss their opinions about the children to try to find positive, successful solutions to their parenting concerns.

Mediation usually takes place with parents together in the same room. If this is not possible, mediation may take place over the telephone or by having the mediator go back and forth between the two parents who remain separated. Mediation is usually not possible in situations where there is an active restraining order or protective order that prohibits contact between the parents.

If the mediation helps the parents to reach an agreement, the mediator will write up the agreement outlining the parenting plan for the Family Support Magistrate. If the Court orders it, the agreement becomes legally binding on the parents. If there is no agreement, casework services will be offered to the parent who still wants to have a visitation schedule set by the court.

Casework Services

The Family Relations Counselor will provide

casework services to parents who ask for it, when:

- the mediation process does not solve the access issue
- the custodial parent cannot be contacted
- the custodial parent refuses to take part in mediation

These services offer parents a supportive place where they can talk about their concerns and ask questions about access issues and the court process. The Family Relations Counselor will share access and visitation options, give information about community resources, and offer support and educate the parent on how to enter into the Family Civil Court process.

Family Relations Counselors cannot give any legal advice.

What Parents Need to Do

Taking part and cooperating in the mediation and casework process is very important. We ask that you cooperate in the following ways:

1. Keep your scheduled appointments and arrive on time for all meetings.