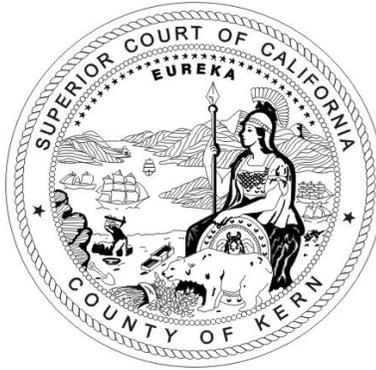


**SUPERIOR COURT
OF CALIFORNIA
COUNTY OF KERN**



FAMILY COURT SERVICES
1215 Truxtun Avenue, 3rd floor
Bakersfield, California 93301
Telephone: (661) 868-4530
Facsimile: (661) 868-7955

Informed Consent for Mediation

You have been referred to mediation as the result of filing a Family Law matter which involves children in the Superior Court of California, County of Kern. The purpose of mediation is to see if the parents can agree upon a parenting plan for their children. Mediators are trained mental health professionals and their job is to assist you in the development of a plan for the children's custody and visitation. We are guided by professional, legal and ethical concerns that parenting plans are in the best interest of the children.

1. Confidentiality

Mediation is a confidential process. This means that mediators do not discuss your case with any other parties including the judges except under certain exceptions. The exceptions to confidentiality are:

A. **Suspected Child Abuse** - As mental health professionals, we are mandated to report suspected child abuse or neglect to Child Protective Services.

B. **Danger to Self or Others** - As mental health professionals, we have certain legal and ethical obligations to ensure the safety of others. If someone presents a danger to him/herself or to another person, there are certain steps which we will take which will involve law enforcement and other parties.

C. **Appointment of Counsel for Minors** - If we have concerns that the children need representation in Court, we can ask that the Judge appoint an attorney to represent the children in Family Law proceedings. This does not mean that the Judge will grant the request.

D. **Recommendation of an Investigation** – If we believe the court needs more information in order to make its decision, we can recommend that the court order a child custody evaluation. This does not mean that the Judge will grant the request.

We do not make recommendations to the Court regarding custody and visitation as a result of mediation.

2. Domestic Violence

The law allows for separate mediation when there are allegations of domestic violence or a restraining order is in place. This is why we ask about domestic violence when your appointment is set. Alleged victims are allowed to have a support person with them during mediation.

3. Interviews with Children

We ask that all children 8 years of age and older be present at mediation so that the mediator may interview them. **Mediators will not ask your children with whom they wish to live because we do not believe that it is in their best interest to make that choice but we will discuss their concerns with the children.** Because of confidentiality, we will only share with the parents what children give us permission to share.

4. Conflicts of Interest

Mediators are to be neutral third parties: if you believe there is a conflict of interest with the mediator you are assigned, please tell them before mediation starts and a new mediator will be assigned to your case.

5. Complaints

If you have a complaint about the mediation services you receive, please contact Patricia Arredondo at 661-868-4508.

6. License Status

Mediators are required to have a Masters Degree in a behavioral health field: our mediators are licensed or are interns. They are required to tell you the status of their license.

I have read and understand this Consent for Mediation, and expressly consent to the Superior Court of California, County of Kern Family Court Services and its agents and employees to conduct this mediation.

Signature of Petitioner

Printed Name

Date

Signature of Respondent

Printed Name

Date

Case Number _____