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# ELEVENTH JUDICIAL DISTRICT COURT

## CO-PARENTING MEDIATION PROGRAM

This pamphlet is designed to explain the mediation process and the development of a co-parent sharing agreement. Everything is centered on your child(ren) and a long-term view of co-parenting.

Where children are involved, divorce or separation is not the end of your family.

*It is a reorganization.* Mediation is a way to customize a sharing plan that helps each parent/guardian to be the best they can be, based on your life situation.

### What is Mediation?

This program has been created to provide people with a choice, leaving the responsibility for making decisions where it belongs-with the family.

With assistance of trained mediators, parents meet together in an informal setting to develop a parenting plan for the future. Mediators do their best to meet parents at a time that works for them, by phone, by video call or in-person.

- Mediation is an important choice that shows the parties are willing to work together to create a more stable environment for the child(ren).
- Mediation is confidential and information is shared only as it pertains to developing a

parenting plan.

- Mediation content is not shared with the courts or with judges; only a finalized plan is shared with the court.
- Mediation is normally two to four meetings but can be more if needed.
- Mediation is a state non-profit program that uses a sliding scale fee schedule.
- Parents are both individually responsible for the cost of mediation, which will be determined once mediation is finalized by the mediator. See enclosed information.

### Why is Mediation helpful?

In most cases divorce or separation of parents has a large impact on communication and creates stress for a family unit. Mediation is designed to be a "restorative" process that strives to keep the child(ren) away from harmful stress.

Mediation:

- Humanizes the approach to conflict resolution. Life conflict is natural and normal. Issues concerning parenting are personal rather than legal issues.
- Encourages participants to see themselves and each other as capable parents with a continuing responsibility to plan together for the

- Lessens anxiety by using informal meetings to concentrate on change in the family unit not the absence of a parent.
- Directs the focus away from the issues which could not be resolved during the time that parents were together, and focuses on "being there" for the child(ren) in a new way.

Research shows that successful adjustment of children following separation, directly relates to the level of cooperation between parents and the continued involvement of both parents in the lives of the child(ren).

*"Co-parenting is not a competition. It is a positive and cooperative step towards two homes working as a team with the best interest of the children at heart. It is always best to work for your kids, not against them."*