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## Consider Mediation

“I think we have worked out all the details so we can split. We just need someone to check out our decisions about the children.”

“We love our kids, but we can’t decide where they should go to school, where they should spend the holidays and who gets them on vacation.”

“We can barely speak to each other. We’ve stopped trusting each other and we both get angry very easily. But we want to sort things out without hurting our children or each other any more.”

“We’ve separated and we both want to be involved with the children. We need help sorting out the details.”

## How can I choose mediation?

When you come to the Masters Unit on your scheduled date, you will hear more about mediation.

If *both* parties agree to mediate, you will be given an opportunity to mediate at court prior to your scheduled Masters Hearing or be scheduled to mediate on another day at a convenient location.

Prior to mediation, you and the other party will be interviewed separately to determine if mediation is appropriate for you.

*Mediation will not delay your case.*

**Philadelphia Family Court  
Custody Mediation Program**

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# CONSIDER MEDIATION

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## What is custody mediation?

Custody mediation is an informal voluntary process where you – the parents or primary caregivers- talk together with a trained mediator to make decisions about caring for your children and parenting schedules.

Mediation enables you to talk things out in an informal, open atmosphere where you can decide what is best for your children instead of having a judge make the decision for you.

Your mediated agreement shall be entered as a court order.

## Who are mediators?

The mediators are conflict managers who are specially trained to listen, reflect and guide the discussion. The mediators do not take sides, give legal advice, or tell you what to do. You make your own decisions based on the best interest of your children.

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### What are the benefits of mediation?

Compared to the traditional adversarial court process, mediation:

- Gives you more control over the outcome
- Is confidential
- May be less time consuming
- May be less expensive
- Allows you to express all your opinions about issues and the results you want
- Leads to fewer court proceedings
- Is less emotionally stressful
- Helps you and your child's other parent learn to discuss parenting in a constructive way

### When mediation may not be appropriate

- If you have a current or previous Protection from Abuse Order against the other party
- If you are afraid of openly expressing your needs or concerns in front of the other party
- If the other party has ever threatened to hurt you or your children
- If you have experienced:
  - Physical violence
  - Sexual violence
  - Threats of violence
  - Emotional control
  - Intimidation

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