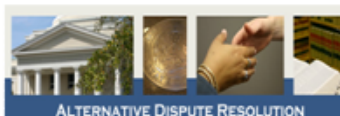


## DO ALL FAMILY CASES GO TO MEDIATION?

As a Local Rule, all Family cases (with the exception of the Department of Revenue Child Support cases) are required to participate in the Mediation Program, unless the court determines that there has been a history of domestic violence or the court has entered an order to dispense with the mediation requirement.

Family Mediators are trained and certified by the Florida Supreme Court. Mediators are neutral and impartial facilitators and have no decision-making authority. For more information on local mediators visit [www.flcourts.org](http://www.flcourts.org).



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Visit the Charlotte  
County, 20<sup>th</sup> Judicial  
Circuit website at  
[www.ca.cjis20.org](http://www.ca.cjis20.org)

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## FAMILY MEDIATION

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## CHARLOTTE COUNTY



Charlotte County Justice Center  
Court Administration Office  
350 East Marion Avenue  
Punta Gorda, FL 33950  
Tel. (941) 637-2317  
Fax (941) 637--2283

## WHAT IS FAMILY MEDIATION?

Family Mediation is an informal meeting where the parties work out mutually agreeable settlements in Family Court cases. Parties have the opportunity to explore options and negotiate voluntary agreements that may be submitted to the Court for review and incorporation into a court order.

*The goal of mediation is to help people in conflict settle disputes instead of going through costly trial litigation.*

## WHO PARTICIPATES?

Parties involved in the family litigation and attorneys for each party may attend. Other third parties may only participate if both sides agree.

*Provides an opportunity for parties involved in family litigation to engage in a facilitated discussion about specific issues in their case.*

## DO I NEED A LAWYER?

Mediation rules do not require you to bring an attorney, however, the decision is up to you. Please keep in mind that the mediator cannot give legal advice or tell you the advantages or disadvantages of any proposed settlement. If you do not want to bring an attorney with you, you may want to consult with an attorney prior to mediation to discuss your legal rights and responsibilities.

**WHAT ISSUES CAN BE DISCUSSED?** Issues may include but are not limited to parental responsibility; parenting plans; child support; alimony; property division and debt responsibility, etc.

*There are no restrictions on the types of issues that can be addressed during mediation and parties may come to either a partial or full agreement that will satisfy everyone's concern.*



## WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF FAMILY MEDIATION?

There is an emphasis on cooperative rather than competitive resolution.

It helps parties determine time sharing arrangements that best meet the emotional and social needs of their family.

Mediation conferences are scheduled within a much shorter period of time than regular court hearings.

Agreements are incorporated into a court order without a court hearing AND may also be incorporated into a final judgment.

## IS THERE A COST?

- Each session is identified as three (3) hours.
- The cost is \$60.00 per person, per session, if the parties combined income is less than \$50,000 per year.
- The cost is \$120.00 per person, per session, if parties combined income is between \$50,000 and \$100,000 per year.
- Parties with a combined income greater than \$100,000.00 should contact the Court Mediation Program at (941) 637-2317.

Always refer to your copy of the Order Appointing Mediation and Fee Notice.

## IS MEDIATION CONFIDENTIAL?

Communication during the mediation process is confidential to the extent provided by law and is generally not admissible in court, other than the signed agreement.