



## **CHILD PROTECTION MEDIATION**

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### **What is Child Protection Mediation?**

Child Protection Mediation (CPM) is a process where a trained neutral third party works with the family, CAS worker, and any other person putting forward or proposing a plan for the child, to resolve disagreements. Child Protection Mediators assist parties in reaching agreements that are in the best interests of the child and meet everyone's needs. CPM can be used at any time that the Child Protection Worker and the parties are unable to resolve issues relating to the child. CPM does not deal with fault, find blame or give legal advice.

### **How Does Child Protection Mediation Work?**

CPM is voluntary and confidential. If all the parties consent to CPM, the Child Protection Mediator initially meets with each of the parties separately to gain a clear understanding of the issues from each of their perspectives. The Mediator will then meet with the parties together to address the issues raised and to develop a plan for the child that is in the best interests of the child and satisfactory to all the parties. At the end of the process, the Mediator creates a Draft Memorandum of Understanding outlining the tentative terms of agreement. This agreement is not legally binding. If, however, the matter is in Family Court and all the parties consent to filing the Draft Memorandum of Understanding to the Court, the judge can endorse the agreement and make a binding order.

### **Who is Involved in Child Protection Mediation?**

Generally speaking, the parents/caregivers and anyone else who is involved in the care of the child and the Children's Aid Society Worker may be involved in CPM. In some circumstances, a child over the age of 12 years may also attend Mediation if this is deemed to be appropriate. If a lawyer is appointed for the child, the child's lawyer attends Mediation.

### **What are the Benefits of Child Protection Mediation?**

CPM allows the parties to be actively involved in negotiating an agreement that is in the best interests of the child. Mediation is completed in a timely fashion, often after one or two joint sessions. The majority of matters referred to CPM reach full or partial agreement. As well, parties who reach agreement in Mediation are more likely to follow through with the agreement because they played a role in developing the agreement.

### **What is the Cost of Child Protection Mediation?**

CPM is funded by the Ministry of Children & Youth Services. All Child Protection Mediators must be accredited Family Mediators of the Ontario Association of Family Mediation and are approved to be on the Ontario Child Protection Mediation Roster.

