Advantages of Mediation

- **Non-Adversarial**—Helps the parties create a child-focused plan, and establishes ground rules for communication that support a long-term relationship for the benefit of the child(ren).
- **Decisions made by the Parents** – the people who know and love the child(ren) best, not attorneys or judges.
- **You remain in control**—the mediator may give suggestions or ideas, but the parties decide what is in the final agreement, or if there is an agreement.
- **It is confidential**—the mediator will not disclose your discussions to the court or others except as required by law.
- **Agreement fits Needs of the Parties** – Facilitates creation of an agreement that fits the needs of each party, focusing on the best interest of the child(ren).

Supporting Successful Families

6th District Circuit Courts

Email: 6th.District@ojd.state.or.us

Umatilla Couny Circuit Court
Umatilla County Courthouse
216 SE 4th St / PO Box 1307
Pendleton OR 97801
(541) 278-0341 extension 240

Umatilla County Circuit Court
Stafford Hansell Government Center
915 SE Columbia Dr / PO Box 170
Hermiston OR 97838
(541) 676-3020 extension 3027

Morrow County Circuit Court
Morrow County Courthouse
100 Court St / PO Box 609
Heppner OR 97836
(541) 676-5661

Custody and Parenting Time Mediation

6th District Circuit Courts

Justice With Dignity and Respect

Web:

www.courts.oregon.gov/Umatilla/FamilyLaw.page?

What is Mediation?

Mediation is a way to help separating or divorcing parents reach agreement on Custody and Parenting Time issues with the help of a neutral 3rd party, preferably a person trained in conflict resolution,

Teamwork in parenting is critical when a child lives in two homes.

The mediator will meet with the parents (and occasionally their attorneys) and discuss options for child custody and parenting plans, and in some cases, child support.

If an agreement is reached, the parties will sign a written agreement. This agreement becomes enforceable only once it is approved by the court as part of the judgment.

Mediation is not Always Appropriate

If your case involves violence or drug use by one of the parties, mediation may not be appropriate. You may ask the Court to waive the mediation requirement in these cases,

Selecting a Mediator

When a Response is filed in a family law case and the parties disagree on custody or parenting time, they will appear at a hearing where a judge will either appoint a mediator and set a mediation hearing or waive mediation. If the parties agree, they may select an independent mediator, such as a pastor or counselor, at their own expense. The judge will indicate the private mediator's information on the Order to Mediate.

Pulling in opposite directions never helps anyone!

What does it cost?

If ordered by the Court, the court-appointed mediator may hold up to 4 hours of mediation (including reporting and administrative time) at no charge to the parties.

If the parties agree to see an independent mediator, the parties must pay any costs for these services themselves.

Advantages & Disadvantages

A Court-Appointed Mediator:

- ☞ Must meet extensive qualifications for education, training, experience, and professional ethics related to custody, parenting mediation, and court systems.
- ☞ Is available for free to the parties.
- ☞ May not be flexible to location or scheduling desires of the parties.

An Independent Mediator:

- ☞ May be desirable to the parties for personal reasons, e.g., religious beliefs or personal relationship.
- ☞ May be flexible to location or scheduling desires of the parties.
- ☞ May not have the same qualifications as a court-appointed mediator, since the Court does not review them.
- ☞ Must be paid by the parties, not the Court.

If an Agreement Cannot be Reached

A judge will decide any remaining issues at a hearing or trial.