

When is mediation appropriate?

There are no time limits on when mediation can be used.

It can be helpful before or after the couple separates and before or after the commencement of legal proceedings.

No matter how bitter and complex the situation may have become, couples can be helped in mediation to resolve at least some of their conflict and difficulties.

Mediation, however, isn't suitable where it is likely to lead to unjust or unsafe circumstances.

An assessment regarding the appropriateness will be made by the mediator.

How much will it cost?

Affordable fees are charged, please phone us for details.

Court-ordered mediation is provided free.

Appointments

Appointments can be made by telephoning or contacting Centacare South Burnett

15 Albert Street, Kingaroy, 4610

email: ccaresb@bigpond.net.au

(07) 4162-5439

Appointments are available **NOW** on the first Monday and Tuesday of every month

Evening appointments can also be arranged

A joint project of Centacare Toowoomba and Centacare South Burnett



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Family and Child Mediation Service

Fair solutions for separating couples

Partly funded by the Commonwealth Department of Family and Community Services



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Separating or divorcing is nearly always a painful experience for the whole family. At a time when conflict is at its height and there is considerable emotional distress and family disruption, important and difficult practical decisions have to be made.

The Family Mediation Service offers an alternative in line with best practice as outlined by the Department of Family and Community Services.

Centacare Family and Child Mediation Service adopts a Child Inclusive practice.

What is it?

Mediation is:

- A mutual problem-solving process for couples who are separating
- To help the separating couple negotiate issues in dispute between them
- A process in which the separating couple make their own agreement concerning the future of their children, their finances and their property
- Facilitated by a trained, impartial third party.

Mediation aims to end the marriage as amicably as possible, to leave the past behind and focus on new lives and opportunities.

Mediation concentrates on the future.

What is it used for?

- Relationship decision making
- Separation/divorce agreements
- Review of divorce agreements

Mediation may be used to negotiate separation issues such as:

- Living arrangements
- Parental responsibilities
- Residency and contact
- Spousal and child maintenance
- Financial arrangements.

How does it work?

- Initially the parties are interviewed separately
- The couple meets together with one or two mediators, usually for several sessions.

The parties are helped to:

- Identify and clarify matters of concern and areas of agreement and disagreement
- Review individual needs and resources, financial and otherwise, of each family member
- Develop plans which meet everyone's needs as fairly as possible
- Develop a Memorandum of Understanding which includes all the decisions made by the couple.

The agreement is not legally binding. If the couple wishes to make it so, they would need to consult their solicitors.

What are the benefits?

Mediation:

- Creates a supportive and constructive environment
- Guarantees privacy and confidentiality.
- Maintains the individual's dignity
- Promotes communication between parties
- Reduces emotional & physical distress
- Controls costs
- Teaches an effective way of resolving future conflicts.

Who are the mediators?

Centacare Mediators are approved by the Attorney-General and have the knowledge, training and experience to help separating couples resolve their disputes.

Mediators

- Are impartial
- Do not make decisions for the couple
- Do not provide legal advice.

It may be recommended that each party seek independent legal advice during the mediation process.