

FAMILY COURT SERVICES MEDIATOR I, II

DEFINITION

Under direction, classes in this series hold mediation conferences; provide educational information on divorce and the impact on children; prepare written child custody evaluations and make recommendations to the Superior Court in a variety of family law and civil proceedings; perform investigations and prepare reports in Probate guardianship and conservatorship matters and step-parent adoptions; and perform other duties as assigned.

DISTINGUISHING CHARACTERISTICS

Mediator I: This is the entry level position in the professional series. Incumbents perform a variety of civil investigations and prepare written reports with recommendations to the Court; co-facilitate the high-conflict parenting class; appear as an expert witness to provide testimony in specific cases; provide supportive educational and dispute resolution information to those families in mediation and/or unresolved parental rights and responsibility plans, and prepare stipulated agreements, or recommendations when necessary.

Mediator II: This is the journey worker level in the series. Incumbents hold mediation conferences; provide clients with a model utilizing communication and problem solving skills for resolving future disputes; prepare stipulated agreements; prepare written reports with recommendations to the Court in a variety of Family Law and Probate matters; appear as an expert witness on matters where an investigative report has been filed with the Court; function as the primary facilitator of the high-conflict parenting class; and may be called upon to provide information concerning the function and service of Family Court Services to the general public or other agencies.

TYPICAL TASKS

- Hold mediation conferences to resolve disputed parental rights and responsibility plans;
- Interview family members and confer with attorneys to facilitate amicable settlement of controversy
- Prepare stipulated agreements for the Courts signature
- Perform in-home evaluations related to child custody, guardianship and conservatorship matters
- Provide written evaluations and make recommendations to the Court in unresolved disputes regarding parental rights and responsibilities, actions to free children from parental custody control, step-parent adoptions, probate guardianship and conservatorship matters and all other referred cases
- Evaluate and assess families for referral to appropriate community resources
- Provide supportive educational information to families throughout the mediation or evaluation process

- Provide Court testimony as an expert witness following an investigative report
- Attends training sessions and staff meetings to maintain up-to-date information concerning family assessment techniques, mediation and family law
- Teach parent education and conflict resolution classes

EMPLOYMENT STANDARDS

Knowledge of:

- Court system of California and the procedures used in Family Law and Probate cases
- Community resources to which clients can be referred for assistance
- Adult psychopathology, family psychology and system dynamics
- Child development theory
- Clinical issues related to children
- Recent developments, current literature, and sources of information related to child abuse and domestic violence, the effects of divorce on children and child custody research
- Interviewing principles and techniques
- Pertinent Federal, State and local laws, codes and regulations including those affecting conciliation, mediation work, family law, probate and mental health issues
- Substance abuse problems and their relationship to family Court issues

Ability to:

- Effectively interview children and adults, maintaining objectivity and skillfully assessing normal and dysfunctional interaction of family members
- Obtain and interpret social data from various sources
- Exercise skill in report writing, providing an analysis of children's best interests
- Work efficiently and effectively within time limits prescribed by the Court
- Effectively communicate findings and actively explore alternative solutions with clients
- Provide assertive intervention in delineating common goals of the parties
- Assess the needs of family members for appropriate outside agency assistance or for further investigative processes
- Negotiate via cognitive and communicative problem solving
- Deal with small group dynamics involving coalitions, hidden agendas, transference and counter-transference issues
- Effectively utilize crisis intervention techniques;
- Use legal language in preparing stipulated agreements
- Assess substance abuse and domestic violence issues

PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS

Strength, dexterity, coordination and vision to use a keyboard and video display terminal on a daily basis. Hearing sufficient to communicate effectively. Dexterity and coordination to handle files and single pieces of paper; occasional lifting of objects weighing up to 10 lbs. such as files, stacks of papers, reference and other materials. Moving from place to place within an office; sitting and/or standing for prolonged periods of time.

EXPERIENCE/EDUCATION

Graduation from an accredited institution with a Master's Degree in Psychology, Social Work, Marriage, Family, and Child Counseling or other behavioral science substantially related to marriage and family interpersonal relationships – **AND** – two years of experience in counseling or psychotherapy, preferably in a setting related to the family law legal system of California.

Mediator II:

The above plus:

Three years of professional level experience in child custody evaluation, family or mediation counseling, or psychotherapy.

OTHER REQUIREMENTS

- License: Certification by the State of California; i.e., Licensed Clinical Social Worker; Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist
- Possession of a valid Class C California driver's license