



# CHOICE MEDIATIONS

Creating Choices, Reaching Agreements

## CHILD INCLUSIVE PRACTICE

Separation can be a very distressing and confusing time for everyone involved, especially children. At Choice Mediations, we aim to alleviate some of these feelings for families by providing Child Consultations, as part of the Family Dispute Resolution (FDR) process. This is known as Child Inclusive Practice (CIP).

### WHAT IS CIP?

Where deemed appropriate by a FDR practitioner and a Child Consultant, and with the consent of both parents, a FDR process may include CIP. This is where an experienced Child Consultant can meet with a child/ren in a safe and child friendly environment to discuss any issues the child/ren might have regarding the separation. CIP provides an opportunity for children to talk independently with a trained Child Consultant in a supportive and comfortable environment. Most children find this process therapeutic. Pending the child's consent, the Consultant may then share feedback with the parents, as well as making recommendations, within the FDR process.

### OUR CHILD CONSULTANTS

Choice Mediations' Child Consultants are highly experienced practitioners who hold tertiary qualifications in psychology, counselling and /or social work. Further to this, all of our Child Consultants hold post graduate qualifications in working with children and their families in a post separation context.



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## HOW IS CIP USEFUL?

CIP is beneficial to both parents and their children.

Children are given an opportunity to explore their feelings about their parents' separation and related topics with an experienced and impartial counsellor. Children can find this to be a therapeutic and releasing process, easing their distress as they feel heard and considered.

CIP is also designed to enhance collaboration between parents as it steers parents away from negotiating as ex-partners and moves them towards co-operating as parents who have heard their child/ren's perspectives. The feedback from the Child Consultant can be used as a guide and reference point throughout the FDR process, ensuring that children's best interests are at the forefront of all decisions and assisting parents to navigate their discussions.

## WHAT CAN A CHILD EXPECT FROM CIP?

During their session, of approximately 1 hour, children have the opportunity to discuss how they are feeling about the separation and other related concerns with an impartial counsellor. The Child Consultant facilitates a conversation with the child, using age appropriate tools, and encourages them to talk about the separation, domestic arrangements and other related topics. The Child Consultant is impartial, non judgemental, and is not suggestive in any way. The purpose of the session is to gain insights into how the child is feeling and provide an environment in which they can comfortably express themselves. No child is ever forced, nor are they ever placed in a decision-making role.

Children are generally seen one on one so that they are not influenced in any way. The appointment is held in our Bella Vista office.

## WHAT CAN PARENTS EXPECT FROM CIP?

The Child Consultant provides parents with feedback from the child/ren's session/s and offers recommendations to the parents. The extent of the feedback is largely dependant upon the child/ren's consent regarding what can be disclosed to parents. The feedback sessions are generally scheduled for 1 hour per child. Child Consultants are not able to make decisions for the parents. Rather, it is envisaged that the parents will use the feedback to assist them in their own decision-making process. FDR practitioners are also able to aid parents to use the feedback in subsequent FDR sessions.

Written reports of the child/ren's session/s will not be provided. The feedback session is inadmissible in any ensuing court proceedings.



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