

Mediation Preparation Checklist – Divorce With Contested Custody

Purpose: To help both parents come to mediation fully prepared with the information needed to resolve child custody, visitation, and parenting plan issues, along with financial and property matters.

1. Parenting and Custody Information

Proposed parenting schedule (regular week, weekends, holidays, summer)

Notes about the child's school, medical, and extracurricular schedules

Preferred exchange location and times for custody transitions

Special considerations (child's age, health, school performance, counseling, or medication needs)

Emergency contact information for both parents and close relatives

Current communication methods (texts, email, co-parenting apps, etc.)

Any history of custody orders, visitation schedules, or temporary agreements

2. Child-Related Financial Information

Recent pay stubs or proof of income for both parties

Last two years of tax returns (including W-2s, 1099s, and schedules)

Records of child-related expenses (daycare, tuition, school supplies, extracurriculars, healthcare, etc.)

Copies of health insurance cards and policy information

List of child support paid or received under any temporary orders

Information about medical, dental, and extracurricular costs shared between the parents

3. Personal Property and Assets

Household furnishings, vehicles, and other personal property

Bank accounts, cash, and investments

Retirement accounts (401(k), IRA, pension, etc.)

Life insurance policies with cash value

Any property the parent believes should be classified as separate property

4. Real Estate

Primary residence (address, value, and mortgage information)

Any rental or vacation properties

Copies of deeds, recent tax statements, and mortgage balances

Information about where the children currently reside and how moves might affect school zoning

5. Debts and Liabilities

Credit cards, auto loans, mortgages, and personal loans

Medical debts and tax liabilities

Student loans and business debts, if any

Copies of current credit reports (recommended to ensure all debts are included)

6. Supporting Documentation

School records, report cards, or attendance history

Medical or counseling records (if relevant)

Communication logs or notes showing efforts to co-parent

Police reports or Orders of Protection, if applicable

Photos or calendars showing time spent with the children

7. Mindset for Mediation

Arrive willing to listen and compromise

Keep the focus on the children's best interests

Avoid relitigating past marital issues

Remember: Mediation is confidential and designed to find common ground