

WHAT KINDS OF CONCERNS MAY BE DISCUSSED IN MEDIATION OR A FAMILY GROUP CONFERENCE?

Here are some examples:

- The kinds of services recommended on your Office of Children's Services (OCS) case plan
- Contact and visitation arrangements
- A proposed change in your child's placement
- The efforts made by OCS to help you resolve the problems you may be having
- How much effort you are making to resolve the problems you may have
- How your child's school or health problems should be addressed
- If it is safe for your child to return home
- Options for your child's permanent plan
- If adoption or guardianship is best for your child, what should your relationship with your child continue to be

HOW MAY I BE REFERRED FOR MEDIATION or a FAMILY GROUP CONFERENCE?

You may ask the judge for a referral. If you have an attorney, discuss your interest in this with your attorney. You may also let your caseworker at OCS know of your interest, as well as your tribal representative, if you have one.

WHAT DOES THIS COST?

When the court makes an order referring parties to mediation or a family group conference, the court pays the facilitator.

WHAT HAPPENS IF ALL MY ISSUES ARE NOT RESOLVED IN MEDIATION OR FAMILY GROUP CONFERENCE?

You still have the option of going through a court hearing or trial. If you reach some agreements, but not on everything, you can focus in court just on the areas still in disagreement.

A PARENT'S GUIDE To the Child in Need of Aid MEDIATION And FAMILY GROUP CONFERRING PROGRAM



WHO IS A CHILD IN NEED OF AID?

A person under 18 years of age is a “child in need of aid” if the court finds that the child needs the help of the State of Alaska because the child is not receiving the proper care or is in a bad situation.

WHAT IS MEDIATION or A FAMILY GROUP CONFERENCE?

In a mediation and in a family group conference a neutral and impartial person, the facilitator, helps the people involved in the case reach voluntary and mutually acceptable agreements.

Mediations and conferences may involve a number of individuals including parents, extended family, and others important to the children and family who meet together with a facilitator to come up with a plan or resolve a dispute.

WHAT DOES THE FACILITATOR DO?

The facilitator helps the people involved talk about their concerns and find solutions to them. The facilitator does not decide who is right or wrong and is not a decision-maker. The people involved make the decisions together.

WHAT HAPPENS IN MEDIATION or a FAMILY GROUP CONFERENCE?

The facilitator tries to create an atmosphere that is comfortable for everyone and is careful make sure that all parties understand the process.

Everyone has an opportunity to speak and be heard. Everyone’s ideas and points of view are important. The facilitator tries to make sure that everyone has the information needed to make whatever decisions or plans need to be made.

In a family group conference, family and others with important connections to the family meet privately to discuss the issues and come up with a plan.

When agreements are reached, the facilitator may help to put them in writing.

IS THIS CONFIDENTIAL?

What is discussed in mediation or a family group conference is private. Before the meeting begins, the facilitator explains confidentiality and some of its limits, and everyone signs an agreement about that. The mediator does not testify in court or tell the judge about what was discussed.