



Mediation is a process where people meet with a neutral, impartial person who helps them discuss a dispute and reach an agreement.

Family justice counsellors

Family justice counsellors provide free family mediation services through Family Justice Centres and Justice Access Centres and by telephone throughout BC. They also assess a family's needs and suggest community resources that might help them.

Family justice counsellors help separated people agree on issues of guardianship, parenting arrangements, contact and child and spousal support. They can also help people agree on changes to an existing court order. When people agree, a family justice counsellor can help record their agreement as a written agreement or consent court order. They may be able to submit a consent court order to be signed by a judge without anyone having to attend court.

In some areas of BC, people are required to meet with a family justice counsellor before filing an application or obtaining a date to appear in court. In other areas, people are encouraged to meet with a family justice counsellor to try to avoid having to go to court.

To set up a meeting, call your local Justice Access Centre or Family Justice Centre. If your community doesn't have one, call ServiceBC.

[Family Justice Counsellors \(Government of BC\)](#)

[Justice Access Centres \(Government of BC\)](#)

[Family Justice Centres \(Government of BC\)](#)

[ServiceBC \(Government of BC\)](#)

Mediation with private mediators

Mediate BC maintains a roster of qualified family mediators who charge for their services. Private mediators can mediate issues that family justice counsellors cannot mediate, and they may conduct longer mediations. They have experience mediating different types of disputes and offer various styles of mediation.

[Find a Family Mediator \(Mediate BC\)](#)

There are also some free mediation options.

- In Richmond and at Vancouver's Robson Square courthouse, volunteer lawyers offer free mediation to eligible families. If you do not reach an agreement at a Family Management Conference and you meet certain criteria, the judge may refer you to this service
- In Victoria, Vancouver and Nanaimo, lawyer-mediators are offering free online mediation to low and modest income families using videoconferences through Access Pro Bono

[Virtual Family Mediation Program \(Access Pro Bono\)](#)

Collaborative separation

In collaborative separation or divorce, a couple works with lawyers and financial and/or mental health professionals, if needed, to resolve both the legal and emotional consequences of separation without going to court. Each spouse has a lawyer trained in mediation and collaborative practice to support them and advocate for them throughout negotiations.

The BC Collaborative Roster Society maintains a roster of some qualified legal, financial and mental health collaborative professionals. Those on the roster are subject to the Society's educational and ethical requirements and complaint process.

[BC Collaborative Roster Society](#)

Parenting coordination

Parenting Coordinators have special training in mediating and arbitrating parenting disputes, and in helping separated parents focus on their children's needs. Members of the BC Parenting Coordinator Roster Society must meet criteria for professional qualifications, training and liability insurance.

[BC Parenting Coordinators Roster Society](#)

Judicial dispute resolution

Judges can also help people work out solutions to the issues that bring them to court. Judges mediate issues between parties in family law cases in Family Management Conferences and Family Settlement Conferences. Case conferences with a judge are also required at certain stages of child protection cases.

[Family Management Conferences](#)

[Family Settlement Conferences](#)

Child protection mediation

Mediation is also available from trained, impartial mediators in child protection cases. Parents, social workers, lawyers, support people and family members meet to talk about the best plan for a child's safety.

[Child Protection Mediation \(Government of BC\)](#)

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