

Should you include your children in mediation?

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Going through divorce or separation is challenging, particularly if you have children. If your children are old enough, they may also express worry, concern, or preferences about what they would like to happen. However, should your children become formally involved in the process?

Family lawyer, [William Roberts-Phelps](#) examines child-inclusive mediation and whether it is suitable for your family.

What is child-inclusive family mediation?

Child-inclusive mediation allows children to be part of the mediation process in a structured and practical way. Typically, couples use mediation to resolve any issues or disputes that arise throughout the process of divorce or separation. Through child-inclusive mediation, your children can have their say too.

Children often wish to have their voice heard on divorce and separation matters, as it dramatically impacts their everyday lives. For example, they may have opinions about who they would like to live with, how much time they spend with each parent and even how much contact they would like with their wider family, such as grandparents. You can choose to listen to your child's opinions using child-inclusive mediation.

When should you include your child in the mediation process?

It can be very stressful for children to talk about living arrangements and other matters, as they don't want to disappoint either of their parents. In addition, children often tell each parent what they want to hear, rather than what they want, which can cause more conflict.

However, parents can involve their child or children in the mediation process, providing them with a safe space to discuss their feelings and opinions.

A mediator will help your child process their views and form clear opinions about what they would like to happen in the future. Child-inclusive mediation can also lead to more child-focused outcomes and help parents understand how to deal with their child's opinions and emotions.

Will mediation be stressful for your child?

In most cases, being involved in the mediation process can improve your child's wellbeing. For example, children often feel frustrated and left out during the divorce or separation process. Child-inclusive mediation can make them feel like you are genuinely considering their feelings and opinions. However, if your child does not want to be involved in the mediation process, you should not force them to participate.

When is child-inclusive mediation not appropriate?

Child-inclusive mediation, in most cases, is unsuitable for children under ten years of age.

If your child is over ten, the mediator may still recommend that your child does not participate if they cannot process their emotions or understand what is going on and how it affects them. If you, as parents or the mediator, feel participation in mediation would be distressing for your child, keeping them out of the mediation process would be best.

Call William Roberts-Phelps today to find out more about child-inclusive mediation.

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Note: This article is not legal advice; it provides information of general interest about current legal issues.

