

***FAMILY COURT SERVICES MEDIATOR I, II***

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**DEFINITION**

Under direction of the Family Court Services Supervisor, classes in this series hold mediation conferences; provide educational information on divorce and the impact on children; prepare written child custody evaluations and make recommendations to the Superior Court in a variety of family law and civil proceedings; perform investigations and prepare reports in Probate guardianship and conservatorship matters and step-parent adoptions; and perform other duties as assigned.

**DISTINGUISHING CHARACTERISTICS**

Mediator I: This is the entry level position in the professional series. Incumbents perform a variety of civil investigations and prepare written reports with recommendations to the court; co-facilitate the high-conflict parenting class; appear as an expert witness to provide testimony in specific cases; provide supportive educational and dispute resolution information to those families in mediation and/or unresolved parental rights and responsibility plans, and prepare stipulated agreements, or recommendations when necessary.

Mediator II: This is the journey worker level in the series. Incumbents hold mediation conferences; provide clients with a model utilizing communication and problem solving skills for resolving future disputes; prepare stipulated agreements; prepare written reports with recommendations to the Court in a variety of Family Law and Probate matters; appear as an expert witness on matters where an investigative report has been filed with the Court; function as the primary facilitator of the high-conflict parenting class; and may be called upon to provide information concerning the function and service of Family Court Services to the general public or other agencies.

**TYPICAL TASKS**

- hold mediation conferences to resolve disputed parental rights and responsibility plans;
- interview family members and confer with attorneys to facilitate amicable settlement of controversy;
- prepare stipulated agreements for the Court's signature;
- perform in-home evaluations related to child custody, guardianship and conservatorship matters;
- provide written evaluations and make recommendations to the Court in unresolved disputes regarding parental rights and responsibilities, actions to free children from parental custody control, step-parent adoptions, probate guardianship and conservatorship matters and all other referred cases;
- evaluate and assess families for referral to appropriate community resources;
- provide supportive educational information to families throughout the mediation or

evaluation process;

- provide court testimony as an expert witness following an investigative report;
- attends training sessions and staff meetings to maintain up-to-date information concerning family assessment techniques, mediation and family law;
- teach parent education and conflict resolution classes.

## **EMPLOYMENT STANDARDS**

### **Knowledge of:**

- court system of California and the procedures used in Family Law and Probate cases;
- community resources to which clients can be referred for assistance;
- adult psychopathology, family psychology and system dynamics;
- child development theory;
- clinical issues related to children;
- recent developments, current literature, and sources of information related to child abuse and domestic violence, the effects of divorce on children and child custody research;
- interviewing principles and techniques;
- pertinent Federal, State and local laws, codes and regulations including those affecting conciliation, mediation work, family law, probate and mental health issues;
- substance abuse problems and their relationship to family court issues.

### **Ability to:**

- effectively interview children and adults, maintaining objectivity and skillfully assessing normal and dysfunctional interaction of family members;
- obtain and interpret social data from various sources;
- exercise skill in report writing, providing an analysis of children's best interests;
- work efficiently and effectively within time limits prescribed by the Court;
- effectively communicate findings and actively explore alternative solutions with clients;
- provide assertive intervention in delineating common goals of the parties;
- assess the needs of family members for appropriate outside agency assistance or for further investigative processes;
- negotiate via cognitive and communicative problem solving;
- deal with small group dynamics involving coalitions, hidden agendas, transference and counter-transference issues;
- effectively utilize crisis intervention techniques;
- use legal language in preparing stipulated agreements;
- assess substance abuse and domestic violence issues.

## **PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS**

Strength, dexterity, coordination and vision to use a keyboard and video display terminal on a daily basis. Hearing sufficient to communicate effectively. Dexterity and coordination to handle files and single pieces of paper; occasional lifting of objects weighing up to 10 lbs. such as files, stacks of papers, reference and other materials. Moving from place to place within an office; sitting and/or standing for prolonged periods of time.

## **EXPERIENCE/EDUCATION**

Graduation from an accredited institution with a Master's Degree in Psychology, Social Work, Marriage, Family and Child Counseling or other behavioral science substantially related to marriage and family interpersonal relationships – **AND** - two years experience in counseling or psychotherapy, preferably in a setting related to the areas of responsibility of the Family Law court.

### Mediator II:

The above plus:

Three years professional level experience in child custody evaluation, family or mediation counseling, or psychotherapy.

License: Certification by the State of California is desired. (e.g., Licensed Clinical Social Worker; Marriage, Family and Child Counseling license) Possession of a valid California class C driver's license is required.