

FAMILY COURT SERVICES ORIENTATION

CONTRA COSTA COUNTY
SUPERIOR COURT





Goals of Orientation

Parents will learn about:

- Recent changes to Family Court Services (“Mediation”)
- How Family Court Services appointments work.
- Children’s needs during separation or divorce.
- Effective communication.
- Safety and domestic violence.

INTRODUCTION

PART ONE



Focus of Family Court Services

Helping parents reach an agreement about how best to raise their children is the focus of Family Court Services. Reaching an agreement almost always helps reduce tension, fears and frustration.

After viewing this brief slide show and completing an intake form, you will watch a video that will help you make the most of your appointment.



What is in a Parenting Plan?

A Parenting Plan describes:

- Legal Custody
- Time-sharing schedule or Physical Custody
- Holiday and Vacation schedule
- Transportation and custody exchange arrangements
- Any needed services (e.g. therapy, classes) for the parents and the children
- How safety issues will be addressed
- Other important details specific to your situation



What if Parents Already Have an Agreement?

- To make your agreement a court order, you must provide a written plan, agreed to by both parents, to the Court for approval.
 - If either party has an attorney, the attorney may assist in presenting the agreement to the Court.
 - If both parties are self-represented, there is information available online at: www.courts.ca.gov/1186.htm.
- Participation in a Family Court Services appointment will allow a professional to review your agreement, assure your plan is complete and prepare a written agreement for the judge.

What Happens to the Appointment if Parents Already Agree?



- If the parents agree on EVERYTHING regarding where children will live and how they will spend time with each parent, BOTH parents must call Family Court Services between 8am and 3pm at (925) 608-2065 to cancel the appointment.
- If BOTH parents do not call to cancel the custody counseling appointment, you might have to pay a \$100 court ordered “No Show” fee.

End of Part One

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