

Lesson #1: 12 Techniques to Enhance Mediation*

**Divorced Fathers Network
Advocates Of Shared Parenting
'Because Children Love Both Their Parents'**

Preparing for Mediation:

1. Situate yourself so you won't be distracted by anything going on outside the mediation room. Have your back to the window, if there is one.
2. Arrive for mediation at least ten minutes early, so as not to allow a dynamic to develop between the mediator and the other parent before you arrive.
3. Show up with an understanding of parenting options and have your preferences well-researched. For example, a schedule marked clearly on a calendar makes it easier for everyone to understand what the father's plans and intentions are.
4. Bring a complete record, including canceled checks, for all child support payments.
5. Be clear, logical and assertive, but not aggressive, when speaking or defending your position.
6. If the other parent sounds "blaming," ask what he/she needs from you in order to co-parent. You can also remind the other party that blaming undermines the mediation process. You have the option of asking the mediator to intercede.
7. Make a good first impression. When meeting with anyone in family law, show up well-dressed. Present yourself in a friendly, professional manner.
8. Stay focused on your children's needs.
9. Don't talk about what your children's mother did in the past. Avoid appearing bitter or vindictive, as you may be perceived as a parent who is unwilling to cooperate.
10. If your children's mother slanders you, you have the option of briefly reminding her of the most damaging thing she ever did to the children, then asking the mediator to take over. This can establish that you will cooperate, but not be a doormat.
11. Be prepared with other options. What is the least you will accept? What might you bargain or trade away?
12. If you can get agreement on 70% of what you want, take it. You can work on the other 30 later.

*from "Fathers Are Forever" by Steven Ashley, 2006

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