

Child/Parent

Child/parent mediation is a response to the changing American family structure. Economically today if a youth is from a two-parent home, chances are both parents work. An increasing number of youth are from single parent homes. Child/parent mediation is a proactive prevention strategy that works to keep the doors of communication open between parents and youth.

*Dr. Mark Umbreit of the University of Minnesota summarizes the productive use of child/parent mediation programs in his 1997 book, **Mediating Personal Conflicts: A Pathway to Peace***

“The relationships of families caught in an escalating dysfunctional cycle of conflict are disrupted, a circumstance that may lead to a daughter or a son’s being referred to juvenile court for behavior such as truancy, running away or being beyond parental control. Mediation may offer a way for families to de-escalate the conflict. It is appropriate for social workers and others to promote the mediation option because turning family conflicts over to the more impersonal court system often results in a superficial decision that deals only partially with the conflict. The adversarial court process pits child and parent against each other, while focusing exclusively upon the juvenile for problems that are related to the family as a system.

In contrast, mediation examines the conflict in context of the family and empowers the child and parent to own the conflict and solution. The agreement reached fits the circumstances of the people involved and mediation models a technique of negotiation that the family members can use in the future.”

Child Parent Mediation Services can help resolve such issues as:

- Running away from home
- Curfew
- Parental Authority
- Responsibilities at home
- Privacy and independence
- Social activities & friends
- Step family issues
- Communication issues
- Cultural conflicts
- Money / allowance and employment
- School authority
- Homework/ academic performance
- Tardiness/ absenteeism
- Guidelines for returning home or placement

Who Attends The Mediation Sessions?

The participants in these sessions are the mediators, the child, parents or guardians and any others the parties agree should be present because of their essential role in the conflict and resolution of issues.