

CHAPTER 33

CASE RESOLUTION OPTIONS

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	PROCEDURE	AUTHORITY
33.01	<p>MEDIATION – OVERVIEW</p> <p>“Child dependency mediation is a non-adversarial process where an impartial, neutral third party without authoritative decision-making power assists the parties, including parents, attorneys, agency personnel, and sometimes extended family members or foster parents to discuss their disputes and concerns, exchange information, focus on the best interests of the child, and create potential solutions for their issues. The main goal is to facilitate resolutions that serve to preserve the safety and best interests of children and the safety of all family members. There should always be a special protocol for handling domestic violence cases? Families, attorneys, and caseworkers are the key participants. Depending on the mediation model used, attorneys may be involved during the entire session, for some of it, or they may not participate at all.”¹</p>	
33.02	<p>FAMILY CONFERENCES – OVERVIEW</p> <p>“Family conferences are family-focused, strengths-oriented, community-based processes where parents, extended family members, social work professionals and others come together to make decisions collectively for children or young adults. Family conferences allow parties to share in the decisions that affect them and focus on a family's strengths, not weaknesses. The conferences are labor intensive and value the ability of families to make decisions relating to their children. The decision-making process is supported by, but not dictated or directed by, the professionals. The family conference is planned by a coordinator who contacts the family, explains the process, and asks the family who should be included in the conference. The coordinator also helps the family think about possible topics and outcomes of the conference. There are different models of family conferences, but they all focus attention on the needs of the children and the family.”²</p>	

This Chapter will soon be updated with additional details regarding mediation, family conferences and other Alternative Dispute Resolution Models.

¹ *ADR Handbook for Judges*, American Bar Association Section of Dispute Resolution, p. 115 (2004)

² *Id.* at 115-116.