

Case Name: _____

Case No.: _____

LA CROSSE COUNTY, WISCONSIN

MEDIATION AND FAMILY COURT SERVICES

GUIDELINES FOR INITIAL SCREENING AND EVALUATION SESSION

This is an agreement by the parties to participate in an initial screening and evaluation session. During this session, parties will learn about the different options available to resolve their conflict and decide if they want to continue mediation. The mediator will complete an assessment to determine if mediation is appropriate for your case. There is no charge for this initial session. By signing this document below, you are acknowledging that you have read and understand the following guidelines and agree to participate in this session in accordance with the guidelines.

1. Although many parents are court-ordered to participate in this initial session, any participation beyond this session is voluntary.
2. This session is confidential, except for allegations of child abuse or neglect or serious threats of bodily harm to anyone. You may not record the session. If you are participating by telephone, you must be in a location where others cannot overhear the conversation.
3. You understand the mediator will meet privately with each party during the session; this is called a caucus. Information shared in the caucus is confidential and will not be shared with the other parent. However, allegations of child abuse or neglect or serious threats of bodily harm to anyone must be reported to appropriate authorities whether shared in a joint or individual session.
4. You agree not to subpoena the mediator. In no event will the mediator voluntarily either testify on behalf of either party or submit any report to the Court in connection with this case, except to inform the Court you appeared for the session and the option you select to resolve conflict.*
5. You agree to make a good faith effort to discuss the issues with the aid of the mediator and to fully disclose all relevant information.
6. You understand the mediator is not acting as an advocate or attorney for either side, and will not provide legal, financial, or therapeutic advice.
7. If both parties agree to continue mediation, a mediation session will be scheduled and each party is required to pay \$100 to the Clerk of Courts prior to your appointment or obtain a waiver of the mediation fee through the Family Court Commissioner prior to your appointment. MFCS may communicate with Clerk of Court staff to confirm payment of mediation fees.
8. If you reach an agreement in continued mediation, the terms of the agreement will be mailed to each party and their respective attorney in the form of an informal letter agreement. This informal agreement has no legal authority.
9. The mediation program recommends that each party consult with independent legal counsel for advice on the legal implications of the informal agreement and to determine whether you will submit it to the Court in a format that has legal authority.
10. You agree that the mediator has the right to end the session at any time if the mediator feels that the case is inappropriate for mediation or further discussions would not be helpful.

Party	Date	Party	Date
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Mediator	Date	Interpreter/Other	Date
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FOR TELEPHONE SESSIONS:

Father Mother Both Parties appeared telephonically, this document was read to the party/ies in its entirety, and the party/ies verbally agreed to the terms provided herein.

Witness	Date
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*Fed. R. Evid. 408(a)(2); Wisc. Stat. 904.085

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