

Truancy Prevention Through Mediation Program

What is Truancy Mediation?

Truancy Mediation is a process that helps parents, caregivers, and schools find a fair and workable solution to children's truancy problems.

The mediation process is a private, confidential way of communicating that does not focus on blame or fault. What is said in mediation is confidential, unless required by law to be reported to proper authorities - such as suspected child or elder abuse or neglect, threats of violence, or knowledge of crimes.

The mediator is a neutral person who does not take sides. The role of the mediator is to make sure that everyone has an opportunity to speak, that all sides understand each other, and that both families and schools work together to resolve attendance and tardiness issues.

Why Mediation?

Because mediation is:

- Informal
- Free
- Confidential to the extent provided by law

Because mediation:

- Improves communication between the family and the school
- Allows the family to design its own solution to the attendance problem
- Is proven to be effective

The truancy mediation program allows you to settle truancy problems without going to court.

Things you should know...

It is very important to the mediation process that the session be confidential. In Ohio, the Uniform Mediation Act (ORC 2710) protects the confidentiality of a mediation session by agreement of the parties to the extent provided by law and protects each person from having to testify about the mediation in court, unless required by law. If for some reason parties do not want the protections, they have the option of opting-out, if they do so in writing prior to mediation session.

A party may request that a support person accompany him or her to the mediation, but this is not required. A mediator is responsible for determining if he or she has any conflicts of interest with any person involved in the mediation. If any conflicts are identified, it is up to the parties whether to continue the mediation.

A mediator must disclose his/her qualifications if asked.

The mediator may only tell the court who was at the mediation, if it took place and if the matter was resolved, not resolved, or was rescheduled.

How Does Mediation Work?

Parents or caregivers and teachers meet privately with the mediator at the child's school for approximately one hour. You will all be given a chance to explain what you think is happening. It is important that everyone understand the issues involved and each other's points of view. The mediator will identify and summarize the issues that are being addressed. Both sides will be allowed to conclude, and then each person will be asked to come up with possible solutions. Both sides will share their ideas to create an agreement, then all involved must commit to being responsible for making the agreement work. The mediator will assist in the discussion but will not provide the solutions - those come from the parents/guardians and the school personnel.

About the Truancy Mediation Program

A student missing several days each month may be developing a pattern of truancy. This is a cause for concern, since chronically truant children often drop out of school and become juvenile delinquents.

If truancy is a problem, this program offers help. It is based on the belief that mediation can be an effective means of improving school attendance, reducing the dropout rate, and reducing juvenile delinquency.

You and your family can work together with people in the school, and occasionally in social service agencies, to address the root causes of an attendance problem. Research shows that the combination of mediation, counseling, and connecting to helpful people in the schools and the community has greatly reduced truancy.

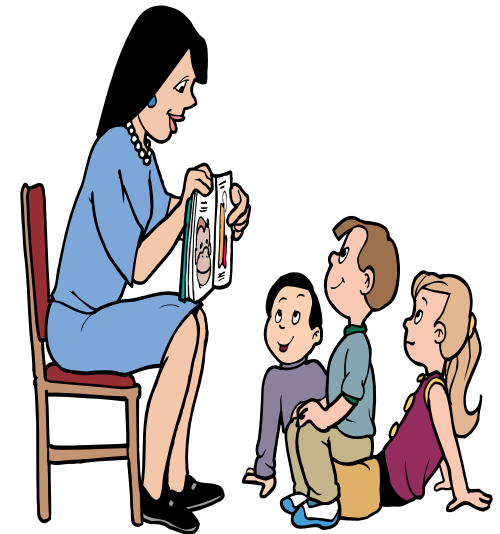
Truancy Mediation is about giving parents or caregivers the opportunity to get more involved in their children's education and to help them learn.

For more information please contact:

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