

INCLUDING THE CHILD'S VOICE IN FAMILY MEDIATION

by Christopher Hahn, Ph.D.

**Child-friendly interviews allow children to be fairly, skillfully,
and neutrally heard in legal disputes between their parents**

In mediation cases, when appropriate, Chris Hahn conducts interviews with children and adolescents using techniques that are not leading, polarizing, or judgmental. Dr. Hahn does not ask children to choose between parents.

Children generally do not attend mediation sessions, but the child's voice may be included if they have been interviewed by the mediator. Sometimes, older children and teens really want to be included in the process. This can be accommodated if both parents agree. Another child-inclusive role of the mediator is that he may help communicate the agreement to the children.

Dr Hahn works hard to keep the mediation process as stress-free as possible. *The mediation process is confidential*; therefore, he may not participate in Court proceedings about information gained in the mediation process.

Including Children and Adolescents in the Mediation Process

Children under 12:

Discussions with the mediator are prompted using pictures & drawings from the *Child's Voice Toolkit*
www.familyzone.co.za



Adolescents:

Discussions with the mediator use well-established child/adolescent interviewing protocols that employ open-ended and non-judgmental questions.

Mediated solutions can preserve relationships; they are less expensive than litigation and they frequently result in more satisfying agreements for all parties.

- ◆ Mediation may allow the parties to save time, money, and stress by avoiding litigation while building a mutually-agreeable solution.
- ◆ Child-inclusive mediation may seem more fair to children because many children want to be heard and to know that their views were considered, but children generally do not want to decide. Big decisions about the children are for parents or the Courts (when necessary).
- ◆ Child-inclusive mediation is not counseling or therapy.
- ◆ Child mediation interviews are not assessments or evaluations.

Attorneys, parents, and others concerned are invited to contact Dr. Hahn for a gratis initial discussion.

Chris Hahn makes every attempt to provide a calming, neutral, and experienced presence.

Dr. Hahn earned his Ph.D. in Human Services with as much focus as possible on mental health and child custody issues. He is a Certified Mediator through the Montana Mediation Association with Full and Family Designation. He also does forensic and investigative work as a child custody evaluator and a parenting coordinator.