

GUIDELINES FOR REFERRING CASES TO CHILD WELFARE MEDIATION

FACT PATTERNS WHERE MEDIATION HAS BEEN HELPFUL:

****PRE ADJUDICATION****

- ▶ Demand for a bench or jury trial
- ▶ Parents who are exceptionally angry at the DCFS caseworker
- ▶ Parents who could benefit from being helped to communicate with the “system” representatives
- ▶ Relatives are demanding placement
- ▶ Any case where the parents would benefit from getting an early start on the service plan

****POST ADJUDICATION****

- ▶ Worker/parent conflicts which are difficult to sort out and interfere with progress
- ▶ Foster parent conflicts with agency/worker and/or birth family
- ▶ Visitation problems
- ▶ Relatives intervening asking for placement
- ▶ Significant breakdown in parental compliance
- ▶ Parental complaints about the service plan
- ▶ The need for a transition visiting plan between the child and their next placement
- ▶ Significant courtroom conflict which tends to hamper the progress of the review hearing
- ▶ A need to try something different because nothing else has worked very well
- ▶ Significant delay in permanency for the child for any reason
- ▶ Putative or legal father appearing late in the case
- ▶ Cases with complicated service coordination issues

****PERMANENCY HEARING****

- ▶ Uncertainty as to what the plan should be or what is in the best interest of the child
- ▶ A need to develop a very specific reunification plan

****ANY STAGE****

- ▶ Cases in which it is important to enhance, improve or re-establish relations in order to move the case forward because the child will suffer from fractured relationships
 - Intra-family relationship
 - Parent relationship with Placement Resource, Caseworker or Attorney
 - Caseworker/Attorney relationship
- ▶ The case has strong conflicts which are rooted more in emotion than fact
- ▶ Communication between the parties has broken down
- ▶ Permanency for the child is on hold because of the conflict
- ▶ People feel “at their wits end”
- ▶ Whenever the parties indicate that the alternative would be a contested hearing

