



Mediation in ARY/CHINS Cases to Reduce Family Discord and Avoid Litigation

The use of formal mediation techniques and professionally-trained mediators is common practice to resolve disputes between parties in a multitude of legal matters. However, the application of these techniques and resources to include Court-annexed mediation is limited in the area of At Risk Youth (ARY) and Child in Need of Services (CHINS). In March of 2019, King County Superior Court established a pilot project to provide families with structured negotiations upon filing an ARY/CHINS petition. This workshop will provide attendees with an overview of King County's efforts to implement formal mediation in ARY and CHINS matters to resolve or manage family disputes, facilitate intervention services, improve family functioning, and avoid unnecessary court hearings and future litigation. A review of outcomes from this pilot and insight from specific stakeholders including mediators and case managers involved in the pilot project will be offered. Additionally, discussion of mediator-family dynamics, role of case managers as key partners in the mediation process, and other factors which may influence the value of this intervention will be addressed.