

MEDIATION AND CHILD CONTACT CENTRE CASE STUDY



Mum and Dad were referred to Family Mediation West of Scotland initially for Child Contact Centre support. They had been together for over a decade, raising their 8-year-old child together. However, as their relationship deteriorated, they decided to separate. The separation was highly contentious, leading to significant stress and tension that impacted the entire family, particularly their child, and severely strained Dad's contact with the child.

Soon after the separation, the child began showing signs of emotional distress. They became withdrawn and started struggling at school, with teachers noting a drop in performance and that the child often seemed distracted or upset during class.

Mum and Dad agreed that they needed professional support to help their child cope. Recognising the negative effects of the family breakdown and the high conflict between Mum and Dad, the Courts referred them to the FMW Child Contact Centre, with the decision that Dad would begin supervised contact sessions with the child. Sessions were held once a week for one hour, with trained staff closely monitoring interactions between Dad and the child, noting any signs of distress or discomfort.

Initially, the sessions were challenging. The child appeared overwhelmed before their sessions and was hesitant to engage with Dad. During the first few sessions, they refused to stay in the room with him, and would often cry and ask for Mum. There was a concern that the child's inability to feel comfortable in Dad's presence was due to ongoing conflicts between Mum and Dad.

As the child's distress persisted, Mum and Dad came to understand that repairing the relationship between Dad and their child would require them to work together. Despite their disagreements, they shared a strong desire for their child to have a healthy relationship with both parents and were deeply concerned about their child's upset during

time with Dad. They recognised that resolving their conflicts and fostering mutual understanding were essential steps in supporting their child's wellbeing and rebuilding the bond with Dad. At this point, Mum and Dad registered with the FMW Mediation service.

At the outset of their mediation, Mum and Dad highlighted that their child's well-being was their top priority. They expressed a strong desire to figure out how to cooperate with each other to achieve this goal. Over 6 sessions, they worked with a skilled mediator who helped them communicate more effectively and understand each other's perspectives. The mediation sessions were not easy—Mum and Dad had to confront deep-seated resentments and work to rebuild trust. However, through persistence and a shared commitment to their child's happiness, they began to make progress. They started to recognize the importance of cooperative and respectful co-parenting. As they worked through their issues, the tension between them began to ease, which positively reflected in their child's behaviour.

With the improvements in Mum and Dad's relationship, the child gradually began to feel more at ease during the contact sessions with Dad. The distress that had previously been so apparent decreased, and the child started to engage more willingly. Staff at the Contact Centre were able to reflect these positive changes to the Courts, which, over time, facilitated a transition from supervised contact to supported contact. In this new phase, sessions were still monitored, but the strict supervision was relaxed, and formal reports were no longer required by the Courts. Interactions between Dad and the child became more natural, and they started to rebuild their bond.

As Mum and Dad continued to work on their relationship through mediation, the benefits became increasingly evident in their child's mental health and behaviour. The child regained confidence and began performing better at school. The progress made by the family allowed them to feel comfortable enough to move on from the Contact Centre. Today, the child spends regular weekends at Dad's home, with a pickup and drop-off arrangement that both Mum and Dad agree upon. While the journey was challenging, Mum and Dad's willingness to work together for the sake of their child demonstrates how focusing on the child's needs can guide parents toward solutions that benefit the entire family. Their efforts have not only improved their relationship but have also significantly contributed to their child's emotional recovery.



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