

MEDIATION CASE STUDY



A referral was made by Dad to Family Mediation West's, Mediation service. Mum and Dad had been in an on-and-off relationship for a few years, ultimately deciding to separate while Mum was pregnant with their child. Mum moved back to her hometown in another city in Scotland to be with her family during the pregnancy. Despite the separation and physical distance, both parents were committed to co-parenting, but ongoing conflict and poor communication persisted throughout the pregnancy and after the child's birth. As a result, Dad's contact with the child was limited, and he was not listed on the birth certificate.

At the time of the referral, Dad was traveling to Mum's city for brief visits with the child, lasting a couple hours every second week. These visits occurred in a public place, and, while Dad sought more contact with his child, Mum was hesitant to allow Dad more contact or to take the child to his city due to the distance and lingering conflict, which affected her trust in him. Both parents expressed that the situation was taking a toll on their mental health and agreed that mediation may help them find a way forward.

In the first mediation session, Mum and Dad emphasised their mutual love for their child and their shared desire to foster a healthy relationship between the child and both parents. They recognised that rebuilding trust was crucial and that this would require honest communication about their past conflicts. Despite the difficulty, they listened to each other's perspectives and made sincere apologies. Mum was open to gradually increasing Dad's contact hours with the child, but emphasized the need for a slow, incremental approach to ensure her comfort and to minimise any separation anxiety the child might experience due to being away from Mum. Dad agreed to this and assured Mum that he would communicate if the child seemed unsettled during visits.

As mediation progressed, Mum and Dad successfully extended Dad's contact hours in one-hour increments, with the goal of eventually allowing overnight visits. Mum expressed openness to this idea but needed time to build trust

before agreeing. They discussed various ways to improve their co-parenting relationship, with Dad being honest about needing some advice on the child's dietary needs and nap routines. Mum expressed her appreciation of this honesty and Dad actively implemented Mum's suggestions and noticed positive changes in the child's behaviour as a result.



A significant point of discussion was the impact of third parties on their trust. Mum was uncomfortable with Dad bringing family members to the pick-up and drop-off locations and was distressed by negative comments relayed by mutual friends about her, allegedly made by Dad's family. Dad apologised and assured Mum that he was unaware of these comments and did not condone them. They agreed to set boundaries with their families and mutual friends, making it clear that their focus should be on their child's well-being.

The pair also discussed their communication methods, agreeing to regularly exchange updates via text. Mum felt comfortable with Dad checking in every few days, and Dad agreed to keep Mum informed about what he and their child were up to during their contact.

One of the most significant outcomes of the mediation was Mum's decision to start the process of adding Dad to the birth certificate, a step she had been hesitant to take due to trust issues. Dad's consistent efforts to reassure her and improve their co-parenting relationship made Mum feel secure enough to move forward with this process. At present, Mum and Dad's communication is greatly improved. They are able to converse amicably during pick-ups and drop-offs and are flexible with contact arrangements, allowing Dad to take the child for outings, such as attending football matches. Both parents expressed satisfaction with the progress they have made, with Mum commending Dad for his efforts and stating that has been doing amazing with their child, and Dad saying similar things about Mum's commitment to their child's well-being. They are actively working together on getting Dad's name on the birth certificate, a significant milestone in their co-parenting journey.

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