

## Definition of Child Inclusive Mediation

### A trained child consultant:

- Elicits the child's thoughts and feelings regarding parenting separation/conflict.
- Facilitates understanding of the child's needs in the context of their experiences, attachment and a developmental framework.
- Validates child's experiences and provides basic information that may assist present and future coping.

### Hallmarks of Child Inclusive Mediation in Minnesota

- Helps parents really hear from the child through the Child Consultant.
- Focuses on the child's experience by exploring their thoughts, feelings and expressed needs.
- Helps parents shift perspective, which, in turn, facilitates agreements.
- Process has a broader focus than addressing immediate legal needs; parents are able to address "the big picture" by focusing on longer term goals, interests, and familial relationships.
- Child Inclusive Mediation follows the same ethical and pragmatic guidelines as other family mediation processes:
  - Mediator serves as a neutral third party to facilitate communication between parents to promote settlement.
  - Agreements are reached voluntarily. The Mediator and Child Consultant may present information and options to parents, but it is up to parents to mutually agree upon resolution. Neither the Mediator nor the Child Consultant has the authority to make binding decisions.
  - Confidentiality, as defined by Rule 114, applies to Child Informed Mediation.
- Child Inclusive Mediation is not an evaluation for custody or parenting time.



*Hearing from children  
improves outcomes for them.*

### When to consider Child Inclusive Mediation

- When the parents' conflict intrudes on the child's ability to interact with one or both parents without conflict.
- One or both parent's capacity to understand their child's needs and experiences is compromised by the conflict.

### Benefits of Child Inclusive Mediation

Consultation with the child has the potential to restore parent-child relationships. Helps parents make more insightful choices. Aids the re-establishment of parental alliance. Has the potential to help the child with post separation adjustment.

### Model

Two professional roles: child consultant and mediator. Considerations: child-related matters are in dispute, age/maturity of the child, parents' wish to better manage disputes, parents' capacity to focus on the child's needs (separate from their own), benefit to the child for participating, family violence, mental and/or chemical health use issues.

*Contact us with any questions about scheduling or pricing!*

## Child Inclusive Mediation Process

A targeted intervention to help separated or divorcing parents understand how their children are experiencing the separation or divorce, and educating the parents on factors that may protect a child's development from parental conflict.

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### **Child Inclusive Mediation:**

Promoting the child's voice through participation in mediation.

Shared physical care of children following separation has long been a complex issue.\*

Children of divorce and separation are often caught in the crossfire of their parents' conflicts. The process of Child Inclusive Mediation (CIM), developed by Dr. Jennifer McIntosh provides a proven, structured methodology for addressing parental conflict, with the goal of focusing on the needs, thoughts and feelings of children, and minimizing negative impacts on children.

Deborah Anderson, Jennifer Joseph, Michelle Millenacker, and Judy Sherwood have been personally trained by Dr. McIntosh in the Child Inclusive Mediation process.

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\*McIntosh, 2010 Australian Family Lawyer.

### **Deborah L. Anderson, Psy.D., LP**

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**Dr. Deborah Anderson** has a broad practice that combines alternative dispute resolution and divorce services (parenting consulting; parenting time expediting; child inclusive mediation; parenting coaching and comprehensive parenting plans) along with individual, family and reunification therapy. Her experience and work as a psychologist provide the framework for the techniques used within her role as child consultant. Dr. Anderson brings the voice of the children into the child inclusive mediation process in a manner that is accessible to parents, and accurately represents the needs and perspectives of the children.

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### **Jennifer E. Joseph, J.D.**

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**Jennifer Joseph** works with families to develop child-centered solutions to custody and parenting time issues through a variety of ADR processes. Her background as an attorney and former Guardian ad Litem helps parents keep the focus on the best interests of their children. Her primary focus in this process is as the family mediator.

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### **Michelle Millenacker, Psy.D., LP**

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**Dr. Michelle Millenacker** is a licensed psychologist. She is skilled in working with high conflict families and strives to help them reduce conflict and focus on what their children need emotionally, developmentally, physically. She provides services as an evaluator (custody, parenting time, psychological, parenting assessments) and ADR professional (PC, PTE, SENE, mediation). She is able to function as a mediator or child consultant in the CIM process.

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### **Judy R. Sherwood, MA, LMFT, MBA**

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**Judy Sherwood** is a licensed marriage & family therapist and works with high conflict families to develop and implement child-focused Parenting Plans. Her work is primarily: Parenting Consultant, mediator, custody/parenting time/Social Early Neutral Evaluator. Her roles in the Child Inclusive process include both mediation and child consultant.

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