

Value of a Child Specialist

A child specialist is a licensed mental health professional who has special training in family mediation and experience in working with families going through divorce or separation. The child specialist is a professional resource who assists parents in creating a child-focused family plan. A child specialist brings value to parents, children, professionals, and courts by providing out-of-court family resolution services.

Every parent is concerned about their children when they are going through separation and divorce. A child specialist can help parents keep children at the center of divorce decisions and bring the voice of the children into the process without pressure to make a choice. A child specialist can also help reduce parental conflict during family restructuring which supports children's future well-being.

A child specialist helps parents:

- ♦ Understand the impact of separation and what their child is experiencing.
- ♦ Utilize effective co-parenting tools to avoid putting their child in the middle of parenting differences.
- ♦ Create a child-centered parenting plan that addresses their child-related issues and concerns.
- ♦ Have an ongoing resource as an alternative to using the courts to address future changes or disputes.

A child specialist helps children by:

- ♦ Giving the child a chance to express feelings, thoughts, and concerns about what is happening.
- ♦ Encouraging the child to feel safe and supported in addressing personal reactions to parental separation.
- ♦ Providing healthy ways to manage stress and emotions during and after the separation.
- ♦ Providing an advocate for the child's needs in the process.

A child specialist helps the legal and therapeutic professionals by:

- ♦ Providing invaluable information and insights about the child—keeping a focus on the needs of child.
- ♦ Making sure everyone is listening to the child's concerns.
- ♦ Giving all the professionals and parents information and insight into the needs of the child and the family system to support designing a parenting plan and crafting other terms that meet the child's needs to include in the legal agreement.
- ♦ Supporting resolutions that are focused on the best interests of children.