



Superior Court of California
County of San Francisco
UNIFIED FAMILY COURT

FAMILY COURT SERVICES
RESTRAINING ORDER CALENDAR
REMOTE ORIENTATION AND MEDIATION INSTRUCTIONS

In Response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the San Francisco Superior Court has scaled down its operations. In an effort to promote the health and safety of the community and court staff, Family Court Services (FCS) child custody and visitation orientation and mediation services are being provided remotely until further notice.

The Restraining Order Calendar assists you with providing protective orders and safety planning around the timeshare of your children for you and your family. Everyone deserves to be safe. Even though there are stay-at-home orders put in place to reduce the spread of Covid-19 it is never okay for anyone to remain in an unsafe home or environment. **If you are in immediate danger and need help, call 911.** You can also get help from the 24-hour National Domestic Violence Hotline by calling 1-800-799-7233. Prior to your court date, you are required to read the recommended handouts and view the online orientation video, First Impressions: Exposure to Violence and A Child's Developing Brain, available in English and Spanish. On the day of your court case, you are required to participate in a mandatory mediation with a trained mediator who works with families and children when there are disputes. The parent orientation and mediation are free services staffed by Family Court Services (FCS). You must go to the San Francisco Superior Court's website at <https://www.sfsuperiorcourt.org/> to access the "Remote Instructions for Parents" to read information on how to begin the process.

FCS mediations will take place on the day of your Restraining Order Hearing. The Court will provide a telephonic mediation for parents. Your mediation will take place over the phone and separate from your child's other parent. The mediator will call you both separately and will speak with you individually. After speaking with you, the mediator will hang up from you and call the other parent in your case individually to share your ideas of how the two of you can safely parent your child. The mediator will hang up from the other parent and share their ideas with you. This process will continue until the two of you are able to reach agreements on a parenting plan for your children that keeps everyone's safety in mind. This process is called a shuttle mediation. Your hearing regarding your restraining order request will take place immediately after your mediation.

If you do not have access to technology or computer equipment, or if a disability or language barrier prevents you from completing the online parent orientation; or if you have any general questions regarding orientation and mediation, please contact Family Court Services at 415-238-3623.

REMOTE MEDIATION INSTRUCTIONS FOR PARENTS

**YOU ARE NOT REQUIRED TO BE PRESENT AT THE COURTHOUSE FOR
YOUR MEDIATION AND ORIENTATION**



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Due to the COVID-19 crisis, all Family Court Services (FCS) mediation appointments will take place by telephone or video conference.

1. You will participate in a telephonic mediation appointment on the day and time of your Restraining Order Hearing. Please have your cell phone available at the time of your telephonic mediation.

2. Before the mediation, you are required to read the Orientation handbook, *A Parent's Guide to Family Court. Please give special attention to the sections of the handbook on, "Mediation in Cases that Involve Domestic Violence" and "Special Needs of Children Exposed to Violence"*. The Orientation handbook is available online in English, Spanish, and Chinese.

3. You are required to watch the video: *"First Impressions: Exposure to Violence and a Child's Developing Brain"*. The online video is available in English and Spanish. You may complete the online video and orientation handbook at a time that is convenient to you, as long as you complete them before your mediation appointment and Restraining Order court date. If you have additional questions after viewing the orientation video and handbook, please notify your mediator and your mediator will set aside time to answer your questions before the mediation. If you do not have access to technology or computer equipment, or if a disability or language barrier prevents you from completing the online parent orientation; or if you have any general questions, please contact Family Court Services at **415-238-3623**.

4. You are also required to complete our *Confidential Family Court Services Form* prior to your mediation appointment. **Please do not leave any sections blank.** Your form will not be shared with anyone and it is only viewed by your mediator to assist your mediator in preparing for the best way to support you and your family during your mediation session. **It is important that you include your current contact information on the form.** The contact information you provide on the form will be kept confidential and it will only be viewed by your mediator.

5. You are also required to read the handout on *Domestic Violence and Child Custody Family Code Section 3044*. We have also included a list of community resources including supervised visitation services for you and your family on our court's website. You may also ask your mediator for a list of community resources and supervised visitation service providers.

6. On the day of your Restraining Order court hearing, a mediator will contact you regarding your mediation appointment. Please have your cell phone available. Please be aware that the mediator may be calling from a blocked number. Your mediation will take place over the phone and directly after the judge calls the calendar on the same day as your Restraining Order court hearing. Please make sure you are available from 8:30am to 12 noon during the morning of your Restraining Order court date. You will be allowed approximately 2 hours for your telephonic mediation and the remainder of the time will be set aside for your Restraining Order hearing. Please be prepared to provide your mediator with your email address. The mediator will need your email address to schedule your mediation appointment.

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7. It is important to have as much privacy as possible during the mediation. Please allow enough time to participate in your mediation session and identify where you can be for your mediation and hearing from 8:30am to 12 noon during the morning of your Restraining Order court date.

8. If possible, please secure headphones for the appointment if there will be children or other adults nearby so they do not overhear the conversation. It is important for children to be protected from adult matters and disputes. Children should not be in the room or within earshot of your conversation at any time during your mediation appointment.

9. Recordings of any type during the mediation are prohibited by law.

10. Full or partial agreements reached in mediations are written by the mediator, reviewed with the parents, and expected to be signed and returned by you VIA EMAIL during the session. A parent appearing by telephone should be able to sign and return any documents received by the mediator within 30 minutes of receipt of the document for signature, whenever possible. Exceptions will be made for parents who do not have access to technology (e.g. printer/scanner). Upon receiving the signed agreement, the mediator will submit it to the Court and the parties. If there are any attorneys involved, attorneys are still responsible for processing and filing mediated agreements for their clients. If there is no agreement, the mediator will obtain your input and complete a Disposition of Confidential Mediation form that briefly summarizes your proposed parenting plan and the other parent's proposed parenting plan. This form is submitted to the Court. Mediation is confidential so this form is the only form that the judge receives regarding your mediation. Please note, even in confidential mediation(s), the mediator is required to report any safety issues and/or concerns.

11. To participate in your mediation by **WebEx teleconference** follow these steps:

STEP 1:

• **By Email:** Open the WebEx meeting confirmation email sent to you by your mediator, click on 'Start the Meeting' and follow the instructions.

• **By Phone:** Dial the SF Superior Court WebEx Number: **415-551-8551**.

STEP 2: Enter Access Code/Meeting Number given to you by your mediator.

12. We understand that parents will have children at home with them during this time and we will be as flexible as we can be. We ask that you be flexible and understanding as well.

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