



# Second Judicial District Court

**Department Title:** Family Services Department

**Program Title:** Dependency Mediation Program

**Manager:** Mary Herzik

**Hours of Operation:** Monday – Friday, 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.

**Program Description:** Dependency Mediation is an informal and confidential process where the family, social worker, attorneys, and other people in the case meet with a trained mediator. The mediator helps the parties explore ways to resolve differences and make a plan that everybody agrees is safe and best for the child.

Mediation offers a cooperative approach to dependency cases, with the goal of moving cases forward quickly in a non-adversarial setting, avoiding contested trials. The court generally allots three hours for each mediation session. On the day of mediation, the mediator provides each parent a brief overview of the mediation process. All parties sign a confidentiality agreement prior to the mediation and all parties are given an opportunity to be heard during mediation. If an agreement is reached, a written agreement is printed and signed, with each party receiving a copy. The agreement is then forwarded to the judge. After reviewing the agreement, the judge signs it and enters a court order formalizing the agreement in the case.

**Accessible Services and Support:** Four contract mediators provide services as part of the Second Judicial District Court's participation in the Statewide Juvenile Dependency Mediation Program.

## Summary of Services

|   |             |
|---|-------------|
| Year Dependency Mediation Program started in the SJDC | <b>2011</b> |
| Average number of dependency mediations annually      | <b>96</b>   |
| Agreement rate for mediated cases                     | <b>75%</b>  |

**Contact us:** (775) 328-3298

*To resolve disagreements that may be barriers to progress in child welfare cases, promote communication among participants and engage families in decision-making about their children.*