

Bayside Mediation is a Child Inclusive and Child Focused practice where all information, discussions and agreements reached during mediation are focussed on the best interests of your children. While all discussions in mediation are focused on the best interests of your children, we use two processes to ensure your children's views and needs are expressed and heard by you as parents; Child Inclusive Practice and Child Focused Practice.

What is a Child Inclusive Practice?

Child Inclusive Practice involves children from four years of age & up to be included in the mediation process by meeting with a qualified Child Consultant. The Child Consultant meets with your child to gain an understanding of how the separation affects them through age and stage appropriate play and discussion. The Child Consultant will also meet with the parents where, with your child's permission, their views and feelings will be conveyed and considered

What is the process for a Child Inclusive Practice?

Pre-mediation:

You will have a private intake session with a mediator who will explain the mediation process, discuss your parenting issues and options for support for your children.

Mediation:

Once you and your ex-partner have each had a private intake session, your mediator will give you the contact details of our Child Consultant and you will then be required to make the arrangement for your child/children to meet with our Child Consultant.

Child Consult Session:

Before you take your children to meet with the Child Consultant she will contact both parents to discuss the process and her role.

When you bring your child/children to their Child Consult appointment, each child will spend approximately one hour with our Child Consultant in her counselling room.

One-hour child feedback session:

After the session your children have with our Child Consultant, your mediator will schedule a time for both parents to meet with them and our Child Consultant. During this session, our Child Consultant will provide feedback as to how your children are coping with the separation and provide you with any key messages your children would like you to know. You can also ask question and seek clarification of any point raised. We will often follow this session with your first Parenting Plan session.

How can a Child Inclusive practice assist in the Mediation process?

- Gives your child/children a voice where they are able to safely express their thoughts and feelings on how the separation affects them
- Assists your child/children with their post separation journey
- Allows your child/children to inform a decision making process without placing the burden of decision making on them
- Helps parents to understand and consider their child's/children's position and supports the parents to be the best that they can be
- Ensures that the Mediation process is focussed on the best interests of the child/children

*Further information available on request

Some important things to know about the Child Inclusive session:

- The session is confidential and permission is needed from your child before their views and feelings are conveyed to you. The Child Consultant will ask your child what they would like Mum and Dad to know.
- Children are told that even though they tell our Child Consultant what they want, it doesn't guarantee it will happen. Some decisions are for parents to make and young people's feelings are considered in this process.
- The message that you want to include your child in this process because their thoughts and feelings are important to you is reinforced.

What is Child Focused Practice?

Your child is too young to speak with our Child Consultant or Child Inclusive practice is considered unsuitable, our Child Consultant can still speak with parents during a Child Focussed session about child development, child and youth issues and assist with age and stage appropriate decisions that are in your children's best interests. Child Focused Practice ensures the best interests of your children are the focus of your sessions with your mediators

What is the process for Child Focused Mediation?**Pre-mediation:**

You will have a private intake session with a mediator who will explain the mediation process, discuss your parenting issues and options for support for your children.

Mediation:

Once you and your ex-partner have each had a private intake session, your mediator will arrange a joint mediation session where you, your ex-partner and mediator will meet. At this session your mediator will discuss Child Inclusive or Child Focussed practice, if considered safe and appropriate; your mediator will arrange for you and your ex-partner to meet with our child consultant.

Child Consult Session:

Your Mediator will schedule a one hour session where our Child Consultant can provide you with information about child development and strategies to support your child/children through separation.

For further information contact Bayside Mediation on 03 9553 6491