

Why Choose Divorce Mediation?

April 2, 2007 by [Helene L. Taylor, Esq.](#)

According to Professor Robert Emery's 12-year study on the effects of divorce mediation, children whose parents spent 5 hours in divorce mediation experienced greater positive, long-term effects than those whose parents chose divorce litigation. For example:

"...28% of nonresident parents who mediated saw their children weekly 12 years later compared to 9% who litigated and 11% in the national averages."

"52% of nonresident parents who mediated talked with their children weekly 12 years later. This compares with 14% of nonresident parents who went to court and 18% in the national averages."

Additionally, residential parents who mediated their divorces gave their nonresidential ex-spouses, "better 'grades' in every area of parenting including discipline, grooming, religious and moral training, running errands, celebrating holidays, taking part in significant events, school and church activities, recreation, vacations, and discussing problems with them."

How can 5-hours of mediation have such a significant impact after divorce? Professor Emery believes the mediation process gives parents a voice and allows them to work together to focus on long-term consequences. Dr. Emery also credits the less disruptive nature of divorce mediation and parent's cognitive decision to handle divorce differently for the sake of their children.*

Robert Emery, Ph.D. is a Professor of Psychology and Director of the Center for Children, Families, and the Law at the University of Virginia. He is also the author of [The Truth About Children and Divorce: Dealing with the Emotions So You and Your Children Can Thrive](#)

WORDS OF CAUTION: Please consult a lawyer before choosing mediation and always consult a lawyer before signing any legally binding mediation agreements. Women in abusive or controlling relationships should consult a family lawyer who specializes in domestic violence before considering mediation.

**Source: The Truth about Children and Divorce by Robert E. Emery, Ph.D., citing as a Primary Reference: Emery, R.E., Laumann-Billings, L., Waldron, M., Sbarra, D.A., and Dillon, P. (2001). Child custody mediation and litigation: Custody, contact, and co-parenting 12 years after initial dispute resolution. Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology, 69, 323-332.*