



Clark & Associates Mediation Services

Family Dispute Resolution | Property Settlement | Restorative Justice

Care Complaints | Commercial | Workplace | Neighbour | Small Claims

Child-Focussed and Child-Inclusive, Family Dispute Resolution Services

Clark & Associates Mediation Services offer child-focused and child-inclusive family dispute resolution services.

Our process has been designed to allow parents to hear, and meaningfully consider, their child/children's experiences of separation and relationship in a highly supportive, resolution focused environment.

Our highly trained Child Expert Consultant, Laura Dodds works with skilled Lawyer and Accredited Family Dispute Resolution Practitioner Kate Clark to deliver valuable and transformative support to families experiencing separation.

Child Expert Consultant: Laura Dodds

Laura is a Family Consultant and Social Worker. She holds a Master of Social Work and has over 16 years' experience working as a Social Scientist with children, young people and families. Additionally, Laura is an experienced private Family Report writer for the Family Court of Australia on parenting matters.

Family Dispute Resolution Practitioner: Kate Clark

Kate is the Legal Director of Clark & Associates and holds a Bachelor of Law (Honours) and Behavioural Science (Psychology). She is an Accredited Family Dispute Resolution Practitioner and a Nationally Accredited Mediator. Prior to her work as an FDRP Kate practised as a solicitor in family and criminal law.

The two options explained

Whilst we anticipate that child-focused mediation is suitable for children younger than 5 years of age and child-inclusive mediation is suitable for children over 5 years of age, we will be responsive to each child and family and tailor our service to the developmental and family needs of each matter.

The process

- Step 1: Referral of matter to Clark & Associates Mediation Services.
- Step 2: Each parent participates in individual, confidential intake sessions with Kate.
- Step 3: Information package and child expert forms provided to each parent.



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Step 4: Each parent participates in a further intake session with Laura.

Step 5: If the matter is deemed suitable to be child-inclusive each child meets with Laura to participate in age appropriate, relaxed, play-therapy-style assessment and interview;

... or ...

If the matter is not suitable to be child-inclusive the matter progresses on a child-focussed basis. It may be possible for play-therapy-style observations of each child to be made with each parent.

Step 6: Kate, Laura and both parents attend mediation.
Children do not attend the mediation itself.

Step 7: If the matter is child-inclusive: Kate facilitates the mediation and consistently invites the parents to consider and focus on the best interests of their children having regard to the views of the children and their developmental needs.

Laura carefully conveys to the parents the issues which emerged during her assessment with the children and provides input into how arrangements could be made to meet their needs.

...or...

If the matter is child-focussed: Kate facilitates the mediation and consistently invites the parents to consider and focus on the best interests of their children having regard to their developmental needs based on theory and their age.

Laura provides information about developmental theory and the needs of children based on their developmental age.

In summary the process:

- Facilitates the involvement of children in dispute resolution via assessment of their experiences;
- Provides them with an opportunity to be heard in an age appropriate manner;
- Allows core themes from assessment to be incorporated into negotiations;
- Introduces current and intimate material into the dispute resolution process;
- Considers the developmental needs of children in any agreement reached.



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Our Fees

For current up to date information in relation to our fees, please visit our website.

Our fees for child-focussed and child-inclusive mediations cover the services provided by both Kate Clark and Laura Dodds.

As at July 2020 they are as follows:-

- Full-Day (8 hour) child-focused mediation: \$5,500 (inclusive of GST);
- Full-Day (8 hour) child-inclusive mediation: \$5,500 (inclusive of GST);
- If further time is required on the day: \$330 per hour (inclusive of GST);
- Room hire (at cost).

Why would parents consider these options?

Research has shown that child-inclusive and child-focussed interventions in Family Dispute Resolution Mediation can result in the following immediate effects:

- Children report positive outcomes for the family;
- Children's emotional responses improve;
- Reduction in conflict;
- Parents report improvement in dispute management;
- Parents are more satisfied with the arrangements agreed on;
- Agreements were more durable and workable.