

Understanding mediation records

Know what a record is intended to do before relying on it.

1 Separate options from understandings

Mark ideas still being explored, points participants agree on and matters left unresolved. Avoid treating a working note as a final agreement.

2 Check the wording

Does the record reflect what was actually discussed? Identify ambiguities, missing conditions and questions that still need an answer.

3 Think about daily life

Consider whether the proposed routines can work alongside school, employment, transport and the child's needs. Ask how changes would be discussed.

4 Get independent advice

Ask your own lawyer about legal effect, existing orders and any documents needed to formalize an arrangement. The mediator does not provide that advice.

5 Keep the intended status clear

Do not assume that calling a document a summary makes it legally ineffective. Do not sign or rely on terms you do not understand.

6 Plan review and storage

Agree what is circulated and to whom. Keep records secure. Clarify what happens next and whether a further conversation is needed.

Further reading

[Justice Canada: Parenting Plan Checklist](#)

[Ontario: Family mediation](#)

General preparation information, not legal advice. Keep personal notes secure.