

Dear

Voice of the child- Role of child expert in mediation

Children's names

Good morning/afternoon/evening.

Your mediator (X) has asked me to contact you to discuss the question of your child(rens) wishes and feelings and how these might be included as part of the mediation process, in a way that is positive and transformative for you all.

I hope that it will be helpful for me to explain a bit about how I work which we can discuss further when we speak.

For me to see children in the context of Family Mediation I would need for both parents to be engaged in the mediation process and I understand that you will be working with mediator (X).

Once you have both had a Mediation Information and Assessment Meeting (MIAM) with X and have agreed in principle to a me speaking with your child(ren) (name(s)) I can have a discussion with each of you about how this works and how I would feedback anything that **your sons would like for you both to know**.

As this is a voluntary process for everyone, I would write a letter of invitation to (child's name) so that they understand the purpose of the meeting and what this is likely to involve.

After meeting with them for approximately 45minutes each, I would join in with your next joint mediation session with your mediator (X) to give my feedback on my individual meetings with your children. There after you would continue your meeting with (X) to discuss your Parenting plan and future arrangements.

I hope that you can appreciate that without a structure in place (the mediation process) the children's wishes and feelings would not be able to be fed back to both parents in a way that would facilitate a positive discussion regarding your co-parenting relationship.

Your child (name) will no doubt **need the reassurance that their wishes and feelings are something that both mum and dad want to hear** before they give me permission to disclose this to you both in mediation.

This would provide an opportunity for you both to hear how your child(ren) are coping through this family transition.

My feedback would not be in the form of a written report/statement. The main purpose will be to provide a window through which **to seeing how the children are experiencing your separation and managing their feelings**.

We can of course discuss ways that will help them transition between their two homes. You can look at how your current arrangements are working or not working for them and whether there needs to be any changes to these arrangements which will be for both parents to decide together, in mediation.

I hope that this explanation helps.

Next steps

1. You both have a MIAM with the mediator (if you have not already done so)
2. You both inform the mediator that you would like me to become involved in the way explained in this letter
3. I speak to you each individually as a pre-requisite to you signing a consent form for me to speak to your child(ren)
4. I write a letter of invitation to your child(ren) explaining the purpose of meeting and what is involved.
5. I arrange to meet your child on their own (online or face to face)
6. If they give me permission to do so, I feedback what they would like me to feedback into the mediation session, to inform your discussions and decisions

Kind Regards