



# Northern Community Mediation

Where The Solution Is Up To You

November 25, 2019

NAME

ADDRESS

CITY, STATE ZIP

Dear NAME:

The mission of Northern Community Mediation (NCM) is to help people resolve conflicts in Charlevoix and Emmet Counties. As a part of fulfilling this commitment, NCM works with parents to help them develop parenting time arrangements that take into consideration, first and foremost, the needs and well-being of the children, while at the same time ensuring that agreements that are reached are reasonable and equitable to the parents themselves.

The goal of parenting time mediations is to help the parents have a civil dialog relating to how the time with the children will be divided among the two of them. How will holidays be handled? Who gets the children during the week? What about the weekends? Summer vacations are always an issue.

Most parenting time cases involve individuals who are 1) getting a divorce, 2) are in the process of a separation, or 3) are returning to mediation for the purpose of re-evaluating or updating an existing agreement. All three scenarios are time consuming, often taking three to four hours or even multiple sessions. All three scenarios can be emotionally draining not only for the parents but also for the mediators. After all, the subject matter of the mediation deals with the most precious commodities of the parents.

In order to maintain the focus of the mediation, parents are often asked to bring in pictures of their children. The pictures are then placed in the center of the table. When the parents digress from the focus of the mediation, the mediators gently remind the parents that this mediation is not about their conflicts with one another but rather about the interests of the children themselves.

415 State Street, Petoskey, MI 49770 Phone 231.487.1771 Fax 231.487.1770 Website [www.northernmediation.org](http://www.northernmediation.org)

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Studies show that children from the early age of six months through 19 years of age sense when hostilities exist between their parents. Parents who fight meanly and frequently can create lasting effects upon their children. Not only is the parent-child relationship affected, the mental health of the children is at risk. It is not uncommon to see

- Emotional insecurity
- Behavioral issues
- Decreased cognitive performance
- Academic problems
- Depression and anxiety
- Negative outlook on life
- Eating disorders
- Adolescent substance abuse
- Physical effects, such as sleep problems, headaches, stomach aches
- Relationship problems

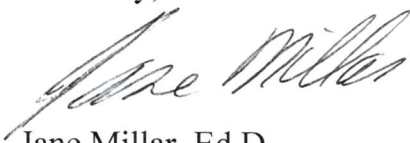
By having the services of NCM help parents resolve their parenting time arrangements in a civil manner, the children are less likely to experience the negative impacts as described above.

Although NCM does charge a small fee for its parenting time mediations and does receive some federal funding for the program, this income does not cover the cost of running the program, especially since fees are often waived due to the fact that many of the clients would not otherwise be able to take advantage of this service. The bottom line is that NCM operates the Parenting Time Program at a loss. In 2018, the program was in the red by \$14,090. In order to rectify this deficit, NCM holds fundraisers, writes grants and requests donations.

The Board of Directors and staff of NCM believe that the Parenting Time Mediation Program is a valuable benefit to the community. Therefore, we are asking for your financial support of this essential program. Please, consider a contribution to NCM to help defray the costs of this important, community program. Enclosed is an envelope for your convenience.

Thank you for your consideration of this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Jane Millar".

Jane Millar, Ed.D.  
Executive Director