

# Family Dispute Resolution

## What you need to know.

### What is Family Dispute Resolution?

Family Dispute Resolution (FDR) refers to five different processes that help families resolve some or all of their family disputes out-of-court.

Most families have to participate in an FDR process, provided by a Recognized Service Provider, before the court will make a decision about dividing family property, parenting arrangements or spousal and child support.

### What are the Benefits of Family Dispute Resolution?

- Gives parties control over the outcomes of their disputes;
- Processes can be adapted to meet the needs of the parties;
- Can help parties reach short-term agreements or a final agreement on some or all of their disputed issues;
- Can reduce conflict between the parties leading to better outcomes for children and families; and
- Often faster, less stressful and less costly than going to court.

Service  
Provider  
Registry

Scan to  
Access



### Options for Family Dispute Resolution – What are they?

- 1) **Collaborative Law:** Each person has a specially trained lawyer who, working with other professionals, provides support and advocacy for their client to reach a fair and informed settlement through agreement to an out-of-court negotiation process.
- 2) **Family Arbitration:** Parties agree to have a family arbitrator hear evidence and make a binding decision. It can be thought of as a customized out-of-court trial where parties have more control over timelines and procedure.
- 3) **Family Mediation:** A neutral mediator helps parties communicate, negotiate, clarify issues and work toward solutions.
- 4) **Parenting Coordination:** Child-centered process facilitated by a specially trained Parenting Coordinator to assist parents who are having issues with an existing parenting agreement or order.
- 5) **Child Support Service:** An office of the Government of Saskatchewan that can calculate an initial child support amount and recalculate existing payments based on the income of the parents.

### How do I find a Recognized Service Provider?

Service Providers are regulated by the Minister of Justice through the Early Family Resolution Office (EFRO). EFRO maintains a Registry of Recognized Service Providers.

You can access the Service Provider Registry on the EFRO website or by using the QR Code.

### What if I cannot afford a Service Provider?

Service Providers set their own fees and payment structures. Low-income options can be found on the Service Provider Registry.

The Government of Saskatchewan, Dispute Resolution Office provides family mediation based on income.

Dispute Resolution Office  
1-844-863-3408  
drofamily@gov.sk.ca

## Does everyone have to participate in family dispute resolution?

Majority of families must participate but a court may grant an exemption from the FDR requirement where:

- There is a restraining order between the parties;
- One parent has taken the child(ren) without permission;
- There is a history of interpersonal violence between the parties;
- One party provides proof of attempts to engage the other party in family dispute resolution; or
- There are extraordinary circumstances as determined by the court.

When parties do not qualify for an exemption but have an extraordinary time-sensitive issue, the court may grant a temporary “stop-gap” order intended to remain in place until families have participated in FDR.

## The other party is not participating, what can I do?

The court may make an order requiring the other party to participate or, in exceptional situations, grant an exemption. Keep record of your attempts to have the other party participate. Contact the EFRO for more information.

For free legal information and Self-Help Kits for court, contact the Government of Saskatchewan Family Law Information Centre.

Family Law Information Centre  
1-888-218-2822  
[Familylaw@gov.sk.ca](mailto:Familylaw@gov.sk.ca)



## Summary and Tips

- 1) FDR helps families resolve disputes outside of court, about parenting, child support, spousal support and division of family property.
- 2) Parties must participate in FDR before the court will make orders about those issues, unless the court grants an exemption or a stop-gap order.
- 3) You and the other party must agree on a Service Provider and participate in the process. Each Service Provider sets their own fees and fee payment structures.
- 4) When selecting a Service Provider, research your options. In addition to asking about fees and their process, you may want to ask how they will handle issues such as financial disclosure, safety concerns and power imbalance of the parties.
- 5) Consider seeking legal advice or legal information, for example from the Family Law Information Centre.
- 6) Once you have participated in FDR, the Service Provider will give you a Certificate of Participation. The Certificate of Participation is required should you need to proceed with a court application.

For more information, contact the Early Family Resolution Office  
1-306-787-0439 or 1-833-787-0439

[earlyfamilyresolution@gov.sk.ca](mailto:earlyfamilyresolution@gov.sk.ca)  
[www.saskatchewan.ca/earlyfamilyresolution](http://www.saskatchewan.ca/earlyfamilyresolution)