

BC parents in conflict about return-to-school during COVID-19

Quarantine Conflict Resolution Service focuses on supporting families' decision-making as schools reopen with low fee mediations.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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With so much confusion and anxiety around children's return-to-school plans, it's not surprising that many families are experiencing heightened parenting conflicts. Families are trying to decide whether or not to send their kids back to school, how they will handle in-person schooling, distance learning, childcare, and more. Differences in risk assessment and impacts on parents' own work schedules are leading to disagreements about what is safe for their children and families. At a time of increased stress, conversations on these topics are not always going well. Mediate BC's Quarantine Conflict Resolution Service (QCRS) may be able to help parents find agreement.

Co-parenting and difficulty making decisions about children during the pandemic account for 50% of the mediations conducted by the QCRS.

What kinds of Conflicts can the Quarantine Conflict Resolution Service help parents with?

BC residents that are finding themselves in conflicts created by or made worse by COVID-19 are eligible for low-fee mediation services. Examples of conflicts parents may need help with include:

- Deciding if/how children return-to-school
- Parent-Teen disagreements about return-to-school
- Return to sport/activities for children
- Childcare plans
- Work from home challenges
- Adapting parenting time and contact plans

Quarantine Conflict Resolution Service - Quick Facts

- Delivered at a distance, online and by phone
- Available province-wide
- Flexible hours
- Roster Mediators are highly trained and experienced
- All processes are confidential
- Effective at improving living conditions in stressful times
- Low Fee Program with Fee Waivers available for families experiencing hardship

Quarantine Conflict Resolution Service

<https://www.mediatebc.com/resolving-other-disputes/quarantine>

QUOTES

"This is a stressful time for parents and for kids. And everyone's resiliency is down. I'm finding parents need extra support being able to elicit and listen to children's views. It's so important to remember to include them in age appropriate conversations about the things that affect them like school, the parenting schedule, and their activities. That doesn't mean they make the choice; just that they have a voice."

- Kathleen Bellamano, Mediator and Parenting Coordinator, Ambitus Consulting

"When it comes to making decisions, I find that conflict can arise when we are reactive and we move directly into suggesting solutions. I encourage parents to back up a bit and start with identifying your family's particular needs. When thinking about the issue of going back to school there may be needs around safety, finances, schedules, extended family, a child's special needs and so on. When you know what needs you are trying to meet then you can make effective decisions and create a plan that meets them."

- Lori Frank, Mediator

"My kids are experiencing a lot of anxiety around the return to school. This is compounding the hard decisions we have to make to function as a family. Work, health and schooling all seem at odds right now."

- Amanda Semenoff, Program Manager Quarantine Conflict Resolution Service, Mediate BC

"Work pressures combined with an active 6 year old at home full-time and so many uncertainties around return-to-school safety measures have definitely affected how my partner and I communicate with each other. Changes to the amount of flexibility we've been lucky to have from our workplaces are also leading to some resentments bubbling up. There has been so much more pressure on parents these days and uneven splits of parenting time and work time is often gendered."

- Ann Lee, Director of Operations, Mediate BC

Mediate BC is a not-for-profit organization that protects the public by managing rosters of mediators and med-arb practitioners who have met rigorous training and experience qualifications. Mediate BC also educates the public by raising awareness of mediation and other dispute resolution processes with funding from the Law Foundation of BC.

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