

## How Do I Choose Between a Lawyer and a Mediator?

You are facing a family law issue and wondering: Do I need to ‘lawyer up’ and have someone specifically on my side, or do we need a mediator to help both of us find compromise?

This is a great question. As a South Central Kentucky family law attorney and an experienced mediator, I have a few thoughts on how to make sure you arrive at the right starting point for your case.

### Attorney vs. Mediator: Two Distinct Roles

It is important to understand that an attorney and a mediator serve two fundamentally different purposes in a family law matter:

#### The Role of an Attorney

- **Primary Goal:** Advocacy and Protection for one of the parties - - but never both.
- **Action:** An attorney's role is to **advocate for your individual rights** in and out of court, file motions when required, respond to filings by the opposing party, and at all times to provide you with confidential **legal advice** specific to your situation under Kentucky law.
- **When You Need One:** When you need someone in your corner to represent your specific interests and to guide you toward the best resolution of your case.

#### The Role of a Mediator

- **Primary Goal:** Facilitation and Resolution for both of the parties.
- **Action:** A mediator is a **neutral third party** whose job is to help *both* sides **explore and, if possible, reach a voluntary, mutually acceptable agreement** outside of court. A mediator does not offer legal advice to either party, and is not empowered to make binding decisions.
- **When You Need One:** When you and your spouse or co-parent are willing to talk and want a structured, confidential process to resolve your disputes and avoid the cost and stress of a litigated case.

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## Which Consultation is Right for You?

To help you decide, consider your immediate needs:

#### Schedule an Attorney Consultation if:

- You need someone to represent you immediately in a divorce, custody, or support case.
- You have been served with court papers and need to file a formal legal response.

- You need clear, confidential **legal advice** on your rights and obligations under Kentucky law before making any decisions.

**Schedule a Mediation Session if:**

- You and the other party want to avoid court and are willing to talk to resolve your issues.
- You are already represented by an attorney, but you need a neutral mediator to help negotiate a settlement with your spouse or co-parent.
- You and the other party have *already agreed* on some major issues but need help finalizing the complex details (like a parenting schedule or asset division).

Whether you need a dedicated advocate or a neutral facilitator, we are here to help you find the most constructive path forward. Contact us today to discuss which option fits your immediate needs.