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Connecting Children's Aid  
Societies with ADR Professionals  
in the South West Region of Ontario



# Accessing ADR-LINK

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This Child Protection ADR Initiative is Funded by:  
Ministry of Children and Youth Services

ADR-LINK connects parties in dispute with an independent mediator or family group conference coordinator. None of the mediators or family group conference coordinators are employees of the Centre for Children and Families in the Justice System (London Family Court Clinic, Inc.) or are affiliated with the Centre. However, all mediators are certified in child protection mediation by the Ontario Association for Family Mediation and listed on its roster and all family group conference coordinators have been trained and mentored through the George Hull Centre and listed on its roster. By participating in the ADR-LINK service, you acknowledge that the ADR service is not being provided by the Centre, and agree to hold harmless ADR-LINK and the Centre for Children and Families in the Justice System (London Family Court Clinic, Inc.) for any and all claims, actions, suits, etc. brought against ADR-LINK directly or indirectly.

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# ADR-LINK

connects Children's Aid Societies with ADR professionals in the South West Region of Ontario. When a child protection case qualifies for ADR, the CAS contacts ADR-LINK to match the case with a qualified professional accepting cases within that geographical area. To accomplish this, ADR-LINK maintains a roster of ADR practitioners accepting cases in any part of the South West Region. ADR-LINK also processes payments and collects data on the process. ADR-LINK is housed at the Centre for Children & Families in the Justice System and is funded by the Ministry of Children & Youth Services.



## What is ADR?

Three categories of ADR are prescribed:

- **Child Protection Mediation**
- **Family Group Conferencing (FGC)**
- for **First Nation** families, an ADR approach established by their band or community, or other approach deemed appropriate by them

This last category is sometimes called "Aboriginal Approaches."

## What are the steps in the referral process?

- 1.** Assessing if the case qualifies for this ADR funding. The CAS does this.
- 2.** Securing consent of key parties to make a referral to ADR-LINK. The CAS does this.
- 3.** For First Nations families, consulting the Band. The CAS does this.
- 4.** Notifying the Office of the Children's Lawyer. The CAS does this.
- 5.** Making a referral to ADR-LINK. The CAS does this.
- 6.** Matching the case with an ADR professional on the ADR-LINK roster. ADR-LINK does this.
- 7.** Setting up and conducting the ADR process. The ADR professional does this.
- 8.** Getting everyone's feedback and opinions about the process. ADR-LINK does this.

## Should I request CP Mediation or Family Group Conferencing?

The success of an ADR intervention depends highly on using the appropriate technique with an amenable case at an opportune time.

**CP Mediation** is helpful when there are one or two parties who can advocate for themselves, and who have the capacity and are comfortable participating in discussions about issues and options pertaining to the child(ren).

For more information, see the web site of the Ontario Association for Family Mediation: [www.oafm-cpmed.ca](http://www.oafm-cpmed.ca)

**Family Group Conferencing** can help when there is a support network of family, friends and community members available and willing to generate options and create a viable plan. For more information, see the web site of the George Hull Centre: [www.georgehullcentre.on.ca](http://www.georgehullcentre.on.ca)

Members of First Nations, either on or off reserve, are welcome to choose either technique. However, ADR-LINK is supporting First Nation communities in the South West Region to foster the development of ADR methods in harmony with traditional practices of decision making and dispute resolution. Call ADR-LINK for more information on the development of Original Dispute Resolution for First Nations.

## Can I choose the CP Mediator or FGC Coordinator?

To maintain the fairness of the process, ADR professionals are assigned on a rotating basis from a roster of qualified professionals maintained by ADR-LINK. However, factors considered in matching are: proximity, availability, any special skill set required (e.g., language, cultural competence), potential conflicts of interest, knowledge of local resources, and preference of parties.

## How do I make a referral to ADR-LINK?

1. Discuss the case with your supervisor. Some cases are not amenable to ADR or the referral may be premature. Your agency may have policies around inclusionary and exclusionary criteria. Find more information on the criteria for ADR funding on the ADR-LINK web site.
  2. Discuss the possibility of ADR with the family and get their agreement to consider ADR.
  3. If this is a First Nations family, consult the Band.
  4. If required by the policies of your agency, secure written consent from all key parties to make the referral to ADR-LINK.
  5. Notify the Office of the Children's Lawyer that a referral for ADR is being made. The OCL has a form for this purpose that you can find on the ADR-LINK web site.
  6. Complete all sections of the ADR-LINK referral form.
- Further information on the referral process is found on our web site.

## What about expenses such as language translation or child care?

Costs essential to facilitating the process are covered through ADR-LINK. Enter this information clearly on the referral form.

## Where can I find a referral form?

This form is available on our web site as an Adobe Acrobat "fill and print" file.

## How do I submit the referral form?

Complete it on your computer and print off a copy for your records. Send the completed form to the confidential fax number listed in this pamphlet.



# Qualifying for CP-ADR through ADR-LINK

To qualify for the MCYS funding available through ADR-LINK, there must be a clear decision made by the Society that a court intervention is being considered, is pending or is in process. ADR-LINK serves the nine Societies in the South West Region of Ontario, specifically:

- Children's Aid Society of the County of Bruce
- Chatham-Kent Children's Services
- Children's Aid Society of London & Middlesex
- Children's Aid Society of Owen Sound & the County of Grey
- Children's Aid Society of Oxford County
- Family & Children's Services of St. Thomas & Elgin County
- Huron Perth Children's Aid Society
- Sarnia Lambton Children's Aid Society
- Windsor-Essex Children's Aid Society

## **That court intervention could be for any of these reasons:**

- Supervision order (new application or status review)
- Society wardship
- Crown wardship
- Adoption openness arrangement

**The court application is contested by one or all parties (or will be when it is launched).**

**Notice is given to the Office of the Children's Lawyer that a referral for ADR is being made.**

**All key parties freely consent to consider ADR.**

**All parties understand they can terminate the ADR process (or their role in it) at any time.**



## For more information

or to make a referral, contact:

**Dawn Lashbrook**, Manager of ADR-LINK

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Cell: 519-282-0349

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Pamphlets in this series are:

- **Child Protection ADR**
- **Family Group Conferencing**
- **Child Protection Mediation**
- **First Nations ADR/ODR**
- **Accessing ADR-LINK**