

### **Beyond Court there is a World of Better Options to Resolve Parental Conflict. Here's Four:**

When locked in bitter conflict, sometimes people resort to court. This can result in poor outcomes as the court is more limited in terms of solutions that can be ordered.

What is needed is a flexible approach to service and services that are actually structured to address specific issues. Here are four examples of specific issues and services that may be helpful:

---

*Issue:* Parents have concern about the behavior and/or mental health of a child. They each blame the other for the situation. The child is likely stuck in the middle. This is a situation that calls for a more clinical approach to resolve the difficulties.

*Service:* [Counselling: Specifically regarding children of separated parents](#)

---

*Issue:* Parents each believe that the court will find in their favor to settle a dispute. However, the process is both lengthy and costly. Neither may understand about the various other approaches available to resolve the conflict, approaches that may be more timely, cost effective and more likely to provide a peaceful resolution. This situation calls for a sit-down to discuss process options that are available for resolving the dispute. Although perhaps a costly meeting, this upfront cost is often far less expensive than going through litigation. It helps to know your options.

*Service:* [Closed Single Session Consultation – 1 three-hour meeting to review your situation and discuss options, particularly useful if other negotiations have stalled.](#)

---

*Issue:* In some situations, the parents are locked in with opposing views, realize that court will be a costly and risky option, yet don't have confidence in handling mediation alone. The parents already have their own litigation lawyers and don't want to begin a new process with Collaborative lawyers. This is a situation where working with a mediator yet

including the lawyers can provide relief to the issues at hand.

*Service:* [Lawyer Assisted Mediation – sometimes the presence of the lawyer can facilitate the process.](#)

---

*Issue:* As much as most parents try to keep their children out of the conflict, there are times when hearing from the child can be helpful to the parents who then can more reasonably structure their parenting plan. This is particularly helpful in situations involving preteen and young teen-aged children expressing a residential preference.

*Service:* [Voice of the Child: When parents want a neutral person to interview their children to hear the child's thoughts, views and preferences, you need a voice of the child interview...](#)

---

The above are just a sampling of creative solutions available for helping separated parent care for their children and resolve disputes.

If you are locked in a parental conflict and think court is the only answer, then I would encourage you to review my [full list of services](#). After reviewing the list, feel free to call and discuss. To be helpful, your situation may benefit from a combination of solutions. As soon as you opt out of court, you can be more creative in terms of how to go about solving problems as well as determining the solutions to best meet your needs.

Gary Direnfeld, MSW, RSW  
(905) 628-4847

[gary@yoursocialworker.com](mailto:gary@yoursocialworker.com)  
<http://www.yoursocialworker.com>

Gary Direnfeld is a social worker. Courts in Ontario, Canada, consider him an expert in social work, marital and family therapy, child development, parent-child relations and custody and access matters. Gary is the host of the TV reality show, Newlywed, Nearly Dead, parenting columnist for the Hamilton Spectator and author of Marriage Rescue: Overcoming the ten deadly sins in failing relationships. Gary maintains a private practice in Dundas Ontario, providing a range of services for people in distress. He speaks at conferences and workshops throughout North America and was the first social worker to sit on the Ontario Board for Collaborative Family Law.