

Mediation
or
Litigation?

A Clear Framework for Maryland Families

ZADJURA
FAMILY LAW

What is Mediation?

Mediation is a private, structured negotiation process led by a neutral third party. The mediator does not decide the outcome. The parties do.

Any agreement reached is voluntary. If no agreement is reached, either party may proceed to court.

Mediation tends to work best when:

- Both parties can participate safely
- There is basic financial transparency
- At least some compromise is possible
- The parties will continue co-parenting after the case ends
- Both parties want greater control over the outcome

What is Litigation?

Litigation is the formal court process. A judge makes the final decision if the parties cannot agree.

It involves pleadings, discovery, hearings, procedural deadlines, and court appearances. The outcome is legally binding.

Litigation may be necessary when:

- There is domestic violence or coercive control
- One party is hiding or refusing to disclose assets
- A party refuses to negotiate in good faith
- An emergency custody or financial issue requires immediate court intervention
- Temporary structure is needed quickly

Mediation -vs- Litigation



Mediation



Litigation

Decisionmaker	The parties	The Court
Control Over Outcome	High	Low/Limited
Privacy	Private process	Public record
Timeline	Flexible, party-driven	Controlled by court
Cost	Lower	Higher
Emotional Impact	Lower conflict	Higher conflict
Enforceability	Contract and Court Order	Court Order

Things to Consider

No process is automatically better. The right process depends on the facts of your case.

- Can we communicate without fear or intimidation?
- Is the other party willing to exchange financial information?
- Do I want a judge deciding my parenting schedule?
- Am I prepared for the time and financial commitment of litigation?
- Is there urgency that requires immediate court action?

Clarity matters more than emotion when selecting the appropriate process.

Some families begin in mediation and later require court involvement. Some begin in litigation and later resolve through negotiation.

The process can evolve. The goal is not to win. The goal is a durable resolution that holds up legally and supports long-term stability.



If you are unsure whether mediation, litigation, or a hybrid approach fits your situation, the first step is clarity.

Zadjura Family Law LLC offers mediation services and litigation representation, depending on your needs.

To learn more about available processes and determine the appropriate next step, contact our office to discuss scheduling options.


Disclaimer: This material is provided for general informational and marketing purposes only and is not legal advice. Downloading or reviewing this content does not create an attorney-client relationship with Zadjura Family Law LLC.

© 2026 Zadjura Family Law LLC. All rights reserved.



ZADJURA
FAMILY LAW

 Annapolis & Columbia, MD

 (410) 562-9335

 jessica@zadjurafamilylaw.com