

Oasis Center Mediation Program

By [Susan Orr](#)

Director of Mediation Services – Oasis Center

In 2004, Oasis Center and the Davidson County Juvenile Court submitted a proposal to the Administrative Office of the Courts in order for Oasis to provide Mediation Services at no cost to unmarried couples and their children under the jurisdiction of the Davidson County Juvenile Court. Oasis received the grant and began providing mediation to families involved in custody and visitation disputes. We have been providing this service every year to date, serving in excess of 200 children and their families per year.

Mediation is offered in two ways. At least one mediator is available every other Thursday to mediate cases “on site” at Juvenile Court. The clients are identified by the presiding Magistrates and referred to mediation that morning. If an agreement is reached and approved by the court, it is made an order of the court that day, thereby concluding the case at the first hearing. Secondly, cases are referred by the Judge and her seven Magistrates in writing (via a Mediation Referral Form) and sent to Susan Orr, Program Director of Oasis Mediation Services. The form includes parties’ names, addresses, and attorneys involved and indicates the issues to be resolved. Letters are then sent out to the parties and their attorneys (if they have one) in order to schedule the mediation at the Oasis Center. Ms. Orr has several volunteer Rule 31 Mediators who assist her in mediating these cases, and we enjoy an average 80 percent success rate in resolving these cases.

The benefits of mediating these cases are multiple. Families avoid the expense of trials, court costs, attorney fees, and time involved in having to be in court, often resulting in lost wages. The children benefit from increased visitation with the non-custodial parent, and, hopefully, less stress involved in visitation and child support issues. The courts benefit from reducing the size and length of their dockets and having cases resolved effectively and in a timely manner.

The major benefit, however, is enabling people to have a voice in determining the outcomes of their disputes in a calm, neutral setting and improving their ability to communicate with each other, with the help of the mediator.