FAMILY LAW MEDIATORS

PREPARE FOR MEDIATION

A calmer place to start

A practical workbook to help you organise your questions, priorities and documents.

Use this pack in your own time

You do not need to have every answer before making contact. Complete only what is relevant, keep the pack for yourself, and ask which documents are needed for your particular matter.

Before your first meeting

- ☐ Write down the main issues you would like to discuss.
- ☐ Separate matters that need attention soon from longer-term arrangements.
- ☐ Ask about the meeting format, fees, participants and documents to bring.
- ☐ Tell the mediator privately about any safety concerns or difficulty speaking freely.
- ☐ Think about what would make an arrangement practical for you and your family.

My three priorities

Questions I would like to ask before booking

This is a preparation tool, not a legal agreement or legal advice. The mediator will assess suitability and explain the process for your circumstances.

Your discussion checklist

Choose the topics that matter to your family. Leave anything that does not apply blank.

Possible discussion topics

- ☐ Divorce arrangements: assets, debts, living arrangements and practical next steps.
- ☐ Parenting: school weeks, holidays, birthdays and special occasions.
- ☐ Parenting: transport, handovers, communication and important decisions.
- ☐ Maintenance: regular costs, changing needs and shared expenses.
- ☐ After divorce: arrangements that are no longer working or new disagreements.

What is already working or agreed?

What would I like to work differently?

A practical outcome I hope to work towards

If children are involved, consider their routines and needs without asking them to choose sides or negotiate between adults.

Documents & maintenance schedule

Bring the information that helps you explain your circumstances clearly.

Gather what is relevant and available

- ☐ Existing agreements, parenting plans or court orders.
- ☐ A short list of the issues and any upcoming dates or deadlines.
- ☐ Income information and supporting expense records, where relevant.
- ☐ Relevant asset and debt information, if property is discussed.
- ☐ School calendars and existing care schedules, if parenting is discussed.

Create your detailed maintenance schedule

Use the South African Maintenance Calculator to work through household, vehicle, medical, adult personal and children's expenses in more detail.

Open www.maintenancecalculator.co.za

1. Open the calculator and select the number of children, if applicable.

2. Enter the relevant expenses. Use consistent monthly amounts; convert annual costs to monthly amounts where needed.

3. Review your entries, avoid duplicate costs, and download your maintenance schedule.

4. Bring the schedule and relevant supporting records to your meeting. Note estimates and any expenses already paid directly by either party.

Questions or costs I would like to discuss

The schedule is a starting point for discussion, not an agreed maintenance amount. Check the calculator's assumptions and allocations with your mediator or adviser.

Your first meeting

Use these prompts to understand the process and choose a manageable next step.

1 Before the meeting

Ask how the first appointment works, whether it is individual or joint, what it costs, and which documents to bring. Confirm a safe way for the office to contact you.

2 During the discussion

Be ready to explain your main concerns and ask about suitability, confidentiality and its limits, the mediator's role, and how decisions or proposals will be recorded.

3 Before you leave

Clarify what remains open, any information still needed, the next appointment or action, and when independent legal advice may be appropriate before signing anything.

My next step / questions to follow up

Useful tools

Accrual calculator	www.accrualcalculator.co.za
Maintenance calculator	www.maintenancecalculator.co.za
Court day calculator	courtdaycalculator.co.za

Calculator results are a starting point for discussion. Confirm assumptions and any legal deadlines with an appropriate professional.