



April 2004

Client Feedback in California Court-Based Child Custody Mediation

Introduction

Since 1991, California's Administrative Office of the Courts has been collecting detailed information from both parents and mediators involved in court-based child custody mediation through the Statewide Uniform Statistical Reporting System (SUSRS). One component of the SUSRS is the Parent Viewpoint, a survey of parents regarding their experiences in court-based child custody mediation. Historically, feedback from custody mediation clients has been extremely positive.¹ This research update presents the results of the Parent Viewpoint survey from the 1999 SUSRS.

Examining client feedback is important for several reasons. Both the California population in general and the mediation client population in particular have undergone notable demographic shifts in the last decade. Between 1990 and 2000, for example, California's Asian population rose by about 1 million and the Hispanic population rose by about 3 million. Ethnic diversity has also been increasing. Non-Hispanic whites, at 47 percent of the California population, no longer constitute an ethnic majority. Furthermore, the number of Hispanic, Asian, and African-American adults ages 28 through 39—the age group of most custody mediation clients—has been increasing, while the number of non-Hispanic white adults in this age group has been decreasing.² Important changes have also taken place within the population of mediation clients. When the SUSRS began in 1991, 2 in 10 parents were Hispanic; in 1999, that rose to roughly 3 in 10. The percentage of parents who had never been married to the other parent increased from 16 percent in 1991 to 32 percent in 1999, and the percentage of parents without attorneys rose from 40 percent in 1991 to over 50 percent in 1999.

¹ For previous analysis and discussion of client feedback from the SUSRS, see

- Depner, C. and Simon, M. (1992). *California family court services mediation 1991: Families, cases, and client feedback*. San Francisco: Administrative Office of the Courts, Statewide Office of Family Court Services.
- Depner, C. (1994). *Client evaluations of mediation services: Perspectives of mothers and fathers*. San Francisco: Administrative Office of the Courts, Statewide Office of Family Court Services.
- Depner, C., Cannata, K. and Ricci, I. (1994). *Client evaluations of mediation services: The impact of case characteristics and mediation service models*. San Francisco: Administrative Office of the Courts, Statewide Office of Family Court Services.
- Depner, C. (1994). *Client feedback: Retrospective results from the California Child Custody Project*. San Francisco: Administrative Office of the Courts, Statewide Office of Family Court Services.

² Will, D. (2001). *Custody mediation and ethnic diversity in California*. San Francisco: Administrative Office of the Courts, Center for Families, Children & the Courts.

Demographic shifts such as these could have meaningful implications for how services are delivered to mediation clients. Mediation programs are faced with the question of how to best serve this new profile of clients. Client feedback can provide valuable insight into whether services have been adapted, or need to be adapted, to the changing population of actual and potential mediation clients. Client feedback can also help to assess whether different mediation settings—recommending or nonrecommending service model, courts of different sizes and resources—elicit more- or less- favorable reactions from clients. Finally, taking an in-depth look at client feedback may help to identify the types of clients for whom mediation works well or not so well.

Background on the SUSRS

The SUSRS comprises a series of studies conducted by California’s Administrative Office of the Courts, Center for Families, Children & the Courts. The SUSRS consists of a network of discrete but interlocking studies containing representative and longitudinal data from over 18,000 child custody cases. Data were collected in 1991, 1993, 1996, and 1999. The current analysis focuses on the results of the 1999 study.

The study was designed to collect information about all clients using family court services, including those involved in child custody mediation, evaluation, and investigation, as well as guardianships. This report focuses on mediation clients, as mediation is the service most commonly provided by family court services.

For the 1999 SUSRS Client Baseline Study, data were collected on 2,812 mediation sessions, representing 80 percent of the sessions conducted in California during the two-week study period (September 27 through October 8, 1999). All but one of the courts in California that offer court-based mediation participated in the study. The analysis employs data gathered from three surveys, as described below.³

- **The Counselor Report**, completed by the mediator at the end of each session, covers allegations and other family issues arising during the session, the process and outcomes of the mediation session, and an assessment of session dynamics. (*N* = 2,812 mediation sessions, 80 percent of the total sessions conducted during the study period.)
- **The Client Profile**, completed by the parents before the session in the family court services office or waiting room, addresses the family’s current situation, family issues, and parent and child demographics. (*N* = 4,518 mothers and fathers, representing 2,500 families and 86 percent of all parents reported by mediators to have been seen in mediation during the study period.)

³ For more information on the methodology employed in the 1999 study, see Simon, M. (2001). *Data collection methods: Statewide Uniform Statistical Reporting System 1999 Client Baseline Study*. San Francisco: Administrative Office of the Courts, Center for Families, Children & the Courts. Available from the Center for Families, Children & the Courts Web site; www.courtinfo.ca.gov/programs/cfcc/pdffiles/dcm99ss.pdf.

- The **Parent Viewpoint survey**, completed by the parents after the session, gauges the helpfulness of mediation and satisfaction with the process and outcomes of the mediation session. Parents had the option of completing the survey in the family court services office or waiting room immediately after the session or of taking the survey home to complete at a later time and returning it by mail. ($N = 3,328$ parents, 67 percent of those completing the Client Profile.)

The SUSRS is the only study on child custody mediation that links the responses of the mediator to that of the parents involved in the mediation session. This paints a much fuller and more detailed picture of what happens in mediation. For each client who filled out a Parent Viewpoint survey and for whom a Counselor Report was available, information from all three of the surveys outlined above was linked for use in the current analysis. A Counselor Report and a Parent Viewpoint survey were completed for 3,328 parents. A Counselor Report, Parent Viewpoint survey, and Client Profile were completed for 3,039 parents.

Dimensions of Client Feedback

Another important aspect of the SUSRS is the detailed nature of the Parent Viewpoint survey, designed to recognize that “client satisfaction” is not a one-dimensional concept. The survey speaks to much more than simply whether clients were satisfied with mediation, soliciting feedback from parents on how helpful they found mediation, how well or fully issues were addressed during the mediation session, the interpersonal dynamics of the session, and various other aspects of the mediation process. Responses to the Parent Viewpoint survey allow for a closer examination of such issues than would be possible through a more traditional client satisfaction survey.

A great deal of custody mediation research has focused on settlement rates or agreement rates. Concentrating on the outcome of the mediation session, however, has the potential to obscure aspects of the mediation process that parents may find beneficial in spite of the fact that they did not reach an agreement. In response to this, the Parent Viewpoint survey was designed in part to tap into clients’ perceptions of procedural justice issues. The body of literature on procedural justice suggests that, in terms of people’s overall sense of fairness about a court service or procedure, satisfaction with the process can be more important than satisfaction with the outcome. It is very important for people to feel that they have been treated with respect and given the opportunity to voice their concerns. If they feel that fair processes were used to come to a decision, they are more likely to accept and to comply with the outcome, regardless of whether the outcome favors them or the other party.^{4,5} This is especially important in the context of child custody disputes. In a large number of cases it is unlikely that both parents will be satisfied with the agreement or other outcome because they have to reach some kind of compromise. But

⁴ Lind, E. and Tyler, T. (1988). *The social psychology of procedural justice*. New York: Plenum Press.

⁵ Tyler, T. (2000). Social justice: Outcome and procedure. *International Journal of Psychology*, 35 (2) 117–125.

they may still find the mediation process to be helpful, so mediation can be regarded as a worthwhile and beneficial service.

This research update examines parents’ responses to 12 statements about different aspects of the mediation session. Parents were asked to indicate whether they strongly agree, agree, disagree, or strongly disagree with each of the statements. In order to simplify the results and facilitate regression analysis, “strongly agree” and “agree” were collapsed into a general “agree” category, and “strongly disagree” and “disagree” were collapsed into a general “disagree” category.⁶ Several of the statements addressed related themes, so they were grouped into four broader dimensions of client feedback, as outlined in Table 1.

Table 1. Components of Four Dimensions of Client Feedback

| Dimension | Component Questions |
|--------------------|---|
| Process Issues | <p>I felt rushed by the mediator.</p> <p>The mediator pressured me to go along with things that I did not want.</p> |
| Helpfulness | <p>Mediation helped me see more ways to work together as parents.</p> <p>Mediation is a good way to come up with a parenting plan.</p> <p>I would recommend mediation to my friends if they had a custody or visitation problem.</p> |
| Focus on the Child | <p>The mediator has some good ideas for us to consider for the sake of our children.</p> <p>The mediator was aware of my most important concerns about our children’s needs.</p> <p>The mediator helped to keep us focused on our children’s interests.</p> |
| Session Dynamics | <p>I felt safe here today.</p> <p>The other parent had an unfair advantage in mediation.</p> <p>My role as a parent was taken seriously in mediation.</p> <p>The mediator treated me with respect.</p> |

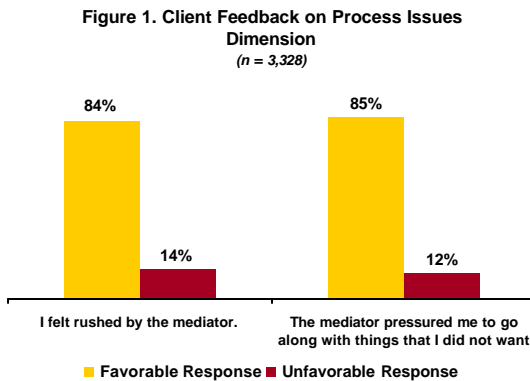
⁶ Responses to the three negatively worded statements were reverse-coded and all responses are characterized as favorable or unfavorable.

Overall Client Feedback

Consistent with results from earlier waves of the SUSRS, a high percentage of clients who participated in the 1999 study rated their experiences in mediation favorably. On each of the four dimensions outlined above, an average of more than 80 percent of parents provided positive feedback.⁷ Feedback on each dimension is discussed in further detail below.

Process Issues

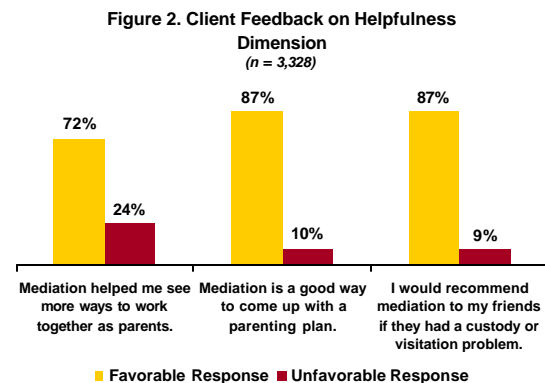
Most clients largely believed they had sufficient opportunity to work through the issues surrounding their custody dispute. A small percentage of clients expressed dissatisfaction with the mediation process. Fourteen percent of respondents indicated that they felt rushed by the mediator and 12 percent felt pressured to go along with things that they did not want (Figure 1).^{8,9}



Helpfulness of Mediation

Ratings were very favorable on the helpfulness dimension, indicating that clients viewed mediation as a good forum for resolving their disputes. The vast majority (87 percent) of clients felt that mediation was a good way to come up with a parenting plan and would recommend mediation to their friends (Figure 2). Responses to “Mediation helped me see more ways to work together as parents” were notably less positive, however (72 percent of parents agreed with the statement). This may be attributable to clients’ disparate views of the role and function of mediation. While the rule of

court governing court-based child custody mediation charges mediators with reducing acrimony and improving communication between parents,¹⁰ some parents may simply see mediation as a process to come up with



⁷ The percentage of clients providing positive feedback was averaged across all of the items within a given dimension.

⁸ In all graphs, the percentage of clients with missing data is not shown, but the percentages are calculated based on all clients with both valid and missing data.

⁹ The two items in Figure 1 are negatively worded; therefore, a favorable response is indicated by disagreement with the statement. For all other items but one, a favorable response is indicated by agreement with the statement.

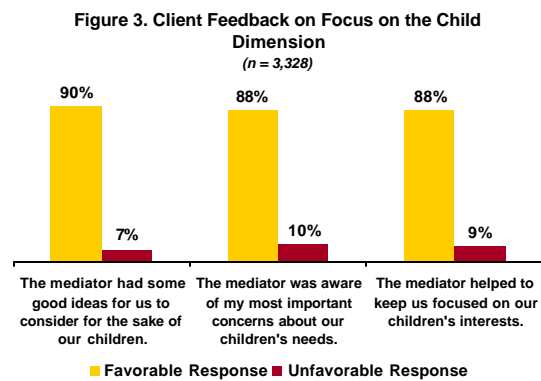
¹⁰ Rule 5.210 of the California Rules of Court states: “Each court-connected mediator must . . . use reasonable efforts and consider safety issues to . . . facilitate the family’s transition and reduce acrimony by helping the parties improve their communication skills”

a parenting plan, and not as a forum for them to learn to work together. Additionally, working together may mean different things to different parents, given the history of the decision-making process in any particular relationship.

Another potential explanation for less favorable feedback with regard to mediation helping parents work together is that this aspect of mediation was not emphasized by the mediator during the process because the session was more focused on working toward a custody or visitation agreement and addressing issues of more immediate concern. Finally, in domestic violence and restraining order cases, there are inherent restrictions on parents working together. California law assigns highest priority to the health, safety, and welfare of the child. For example, a parent may need to make arrangements for supervised visitation or a neutral exchange point, which does not necessarily involve the parents working together.

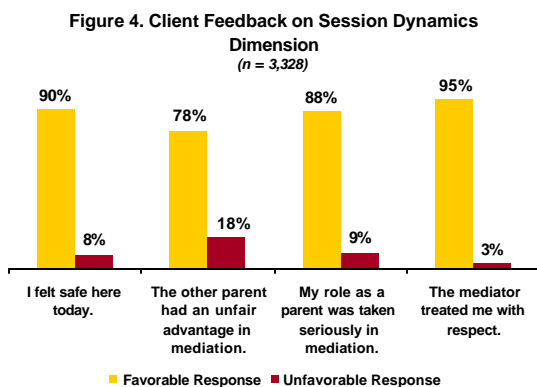
Focus on the Child

More clients provided favorable feedback on the focus on the child dimension. The overwhelming majority of clients agreed that the mediation session was appropriately focused on the welfare of their children. Responses to the three component questions of this dimension were very consistent: 90 percent of clients felt that the mediator had good ideas to consider for their children, and 88 percent reported that the mediator both was aware of their concerns about their children’s needs and helped to keep them focused on their children’s interests (Figure 3).



Session Dynamics

A high proportion of clients also gave favorable ratings to the session dynamics dimension. Nearly all clients (95 percent) agreed that the mediator treated them with respect, 9 out of 10 (90 percent) reported that they felt safe in the mediation session, and 88 percent believed that their role as a parent was taken seriously (Figure 4). A statement that yielded less positive feedback than the others on this dimension was “The other parent had an unfair advantage in mediation.” This could be attributable to longstanding power dynamics in the relationship, as well as mediator skills in controlling for power imbalances.



Variations in Feedback Among Different Segments of the Client Population

Because the mediation client population is so diverse—in terms of demographics, resources, and the circumstances that bring them to mediation—it is important to examine the degree to which client feedback varies among different segments of the client population. Mediation clients differ not only in terms of these individual characteristics, but also in terms of the environment in which their mediation session took place, as courts vary in size, resources, and the context in which mediation is conducted. Thus, it is essential to examine a variety of different factors as potential correlates of client feedback.

The current analysis examines the relationship between the client’s feedback and the characteristics of the client, the client’s relationship with the other parent, and issues in the case as reported by the client; issues in the case as reported by the mediator; and characteristics of the county and court in which the mediation session took place.¹¹ For a detailed listing of the factors examined within each of these categories, see Table 2. See Appendix A for the basic frequencies of the variables outlined in Table 2.

It is important to examine a variety of factors that could potentially be related to client feedback; however, the fact that there are so many factors—and that some of them are interrelated—poses a challenge in terms of analyzing and interpreting those relationships. For example, clients at lower levels of educational attainment tend to have lower incomes, and clients who have lower incomes are less likely to have attorneys. It can be challenging to sort out the effects of 18 different variables and assess which of them has a stronger or weaker relationship to client feedback.

A statistical technique called logistic regression takes into account the relationship between all of the factors (or variables) and allows for the examination of the independent effects of the variables on client feedback. For a more detailed explanation of regression, the specific models used in the analysis, and the regression results, see Appendix B.

¹¹ County and court characteristics are not collected as part of the SUSRS, so data related to these characteristics come from other sources. Data sources are detailed in Table 2.

Table 2. Variables Examined in Relation to Client Feedback

| Category | Variable |
|---|--|
| Client Demographics: Self-Reported by Client | <p>Parental role: mother or father</p> <p>Age</p> <p>Race/ethnicity</p> <p>Education</p> <p>Personal monthly income</p> <p>Marital status: legal relationship of parents</p> <p>Legal representation</p> |
| Case Characteristics: Self-Reported by Client | <p>Interparental violence: The mother, the father, or both parents reported one or more of the following in their relationship—physical violence; threats of violence; pushing, grabbing, shoving, throwing things, slapping, kicking, biting, or hitting; sexual assault; use of a weapon; current or past restraining order.</p> <p>Infant or toddler involved in custody dispute</p> <p>Number of issues about children: Parents were asked to choose from a list of the following issues that they wished to discuss about their children in the mediation session—behavior problems, emotional adjustment, medical needs, school problems, refusal to visit, and safety.</p> |
| Case Characteristics: Reported by Mediator | <p>Initial or modified orders</p> <p>Substance abuse</p> <p>Rating of case issue difficulty: The mediator was asked to rate the difficulty of issues worked on during the mediation session on a scale from 1 (not at all difficult) to 10 (extremely difficult).</p> <p>Number of issues raised about parents: The mediator was asked to choose from a list of issues raised by one parent about the other parent either before or during the mediation session—child abduction and neglect, domestic violence, maligning the other parent in front of the child, harassing the other parent, psychological disorder, drug or alcohol abuse, stalking the other parent, physical abuse of child, sexual abuse of child, and emotional abuse of child.</p> |
| County and Court Characteristics | <p>County population, 1999 (Source: California Department of Finance, Race/Ethnic Population With Age and Sex Detail, 1970–2040, December 1998.)</p> <p>Number of annual mediations, 1999</p> <p>Family and Children Services Budget, FY 2001–2002 (Source: Administrative Office of the Courts, Finance Division, Annual Budget for Family and Children Services, 2001–02.)</p> <p>Service model: recommending or nonrecommending</p> |

Looking at all 12 of the measures of client feedback, the regression analysis uncovered six factors that had consistent and significant relationships to client feedback. As these factors vary, so too does the likelihood of providing positive feedback. It is important to note, however, that the degree of variation among different segments of the client population was not only small but within ratings at the positive end of the scale. Making drastic changes mediation services in order to respond to lower levels of favorable feedback among certain client segments, therefore, does not seem to be warranted. Nonetheless, understanding how different types of clients may react differently to the mediation process can be valuable for mediators, and more modest or incremental changes that can be implemented to address the diverse needs of clients may be indicated.

The six variables that were found to have the greatest effects on client feedback are listed below, in order of their relative impact.

1. *Service model:* Clients in nonrecommending courts were more likely to provide positive feedback than those in recommending courts.
2. *Number of issues raised about parents:* The greater the number of issues raised, the less likely clients were to provide positive feedback.
3. *Legal representation:* Clients without attorneys provided more positive feedback than those with attorneys.
4. *Personal monthly income:* Compared with parents who earned more than \$2,000 a month, those who earned \$800 or less per month were less likely to provide positive feedback.
5. *Marital status:* Compared with parents who were never married or were still legally married, divorced parents were the least likely to provide positive feedback.
6. *Parental role:* Overall, mothers were more likely than fathers to provide positive feedback. However, mothers were less likely to report having felt safe during the mediation session.¹²

¹² No same-sex parents participated in the 1999 study, so this analysis applies only to parents of the opposite sex.

As previously discussed, the questions on the Parent Viewpoint survey covered multiple aspects, or dimensions, of client satisfaction with mediation. Detailed analysis revealed that the variables with the greatest impact on client feedback differed by dimension, i.e., the factors that best explained client feedback on the process issues dimension weren't necessarily the same as the factors that best explained client feedback on the helpfulness dimension. Table 3 provides an overview of the key predictors of client feedback by dimension. The three to five predictors that are most strongly associated with client feedback within each dimension are discussed in further detail below.¹³ Interpretation of the results is a product of extensive discussion with family court services directors and staff.

Table 3. Key Predictors of Client Feedback by Dimension

| Variable | Dimension | | | |
|--|----------------|-------------|--------------------|------------------|
| | Process Issues | Helpfulness | Focus on the Child | Session Dynamics |
| Parental role | ✓ | | | ✓ |
| Age | | | | |
| Race/ethnicity | ✓ | ✓ | | |
| Education | | ✓ | ✓ | |
| Personal monthly income | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ |
| Marital status | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | |
| Legal representation | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | |
| Interparental violence | | ✓ | | ✓ |
| Infant/toddler involved | | | | |
| Number of issues raised about children | ✓ | | | |
| Initial or modified orders | | ✓ | | |
| Substance abuse | | | | |
| Rating of case issue difficulty | | ✓ | | ✓ |
| Number of issues raised about parents | | ✓ | ✓ | |
| County population | | | | |
| Number of annual mediations | | | | |
| Family and Children Services budget | | | | |
| Service model | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ |

¹³ Table 3 lists all of the variables that were found to have a statistically significant relationship to client feedback. The discussion does not examine all of these variables in detail, but focuses on the variables with the strongest relative impact on client feedback in each of the dimensions.

Process Issues

The process issues dimension addresses whether the client felt rushed or pressured during the mediation session. The predictors having the strongest relationship to client feedback on these issues were service model, income, parental role, and legal representation.

In terms of service model, clients in nonrecommending courts were slightly more likely to provide positive feedback than those in recommending courts (Figure 5).¹⁴ These results should be interpreted with caution for a few reasons. First, it is important to note that recommending and nonrecommending are very broad categories that mask complex differences in the mediation process from county to county. Secondly, clients were not asked to specifically assess the service model, so it is unclear what aspect of the service contributed to these varying levels of favorable client feedback.

Low-income clients, those whose monthly income was \$800 or less,¹⁵ were less likely to provide positive feedback than those in the highest income category (\$2,000 or more). As illustrated in Figure 5, mothers were more likely than fathers to provide positive feedback with regard to process issues. Additionally, feedback was more positive among self-represented clients than among those who had attorneys.

Helpfulness of Mediation

The helpfulness dimension more broadly addresses how helpful clients found mediation to be in resolving their custody disputes. The predictors most strongly associated with client feedback in this area were number of issues raised about parents, educational attainment, marital status, and legal representation. Figure 6 illustrates that as the number of issues raised about parents increases, the likelihood of providing positive feedback on this dimension decreases. This relationship is especially pronounced with respect to the statement “Mediation helped me see more ways to work together as parents.” As previously discussed, in cases involving multiple parent issues, especially issues related to violence between the parents and child abuse and neglect, the extent to which parents can or should work together may be limited. Additionally, in cases involving multiple parent issues it may simply be more difficult for the mediator to address the full spectrum of issues given the time allotted to mediation, so getting the parents to work together may be less emphasized than other aspects of the mediation process.

Clients with at least a college degree were less likely to provide positive feedback than those at lower levels of educational attainment. It could be that less educated clients have more limited access to resources to help them work through their custody disputes and related issues, so they especially appreciate the assistance that mediation offers them.

¹⁴ The statistics presented in the graphs are not illustrative of the regression results, in that they do not take into account how multiple variables are interrelated. However, the graphs are presented to give the reader a general sense of the magnitude and direction of the relationship between client feedback and the variables of interest. Additionally, the graphs that are presented indicate where the strongest effects of a variable on a particular dimension of client feedback are seen; these relationships may not hold true on other dimensions.

¹⁵ Monthly income refers to the client’s personal monthly income after taxes from all sources except Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) and child support.

In terms of marital status, there was very little difference in client feedback between parents who were never married and parents who were still legally married (see Figure 6). Divorced parents, on the other hand, were consistently the least likely to provide positive feedback on the helpfulness of mediation. This may be because divorced parents enter into the mediation process in a different framework. Their concerns go beyond just custody and visitation; they are dealing with the formal undoing of their relationship, including issues such as division of property and spousal support. This puts them into more of an adversarial framework, which does not fall in line with working cooperatively to create a parenting plan. Parents may also be dealing with a number of emotional issues surrounding the divorce, or having difficulty accepting the divorce, and this could make it problematic for them to separate their role as a (former) spouse from their role as a parent. Additionally, reviewers indicated that parents who are not yet divorced may be more willing to work together because reconciliation is still a possibility for them.

Finally, as shown in Figure 6, clients who did not have attorneys were more likely to provide positive feedback than those with legal representation. This may be related in part to the fact that client feedback is often shaped by peoples' expectations of a service and that attorneys do a lot of work to condition the expectations of their clients. When parents have attorneys, they tend to learn an adversarial framework, which again runs counter to the notion of working together. Clients without attorneys may see mediation as the first opportunity to tell their story. In the absence of other resources, they may be able to better appreciate what mediation has to offer and may even feel more empowered to resolve their custody disputes. On the other hand, reviewers suggest that clients with attorneys may feel less absorbed in the process because their attorneys have been handling everything for them.

Focus on the Child

The focus on the child dimension speaks to the extent to which the interests of and concerns about the children were considered during the mediation session. The factors most closely associated with feedback in this area are educational attainment, number of issues raised about parents, and service model. The nature of the relationship of each these variables to client feedback is consistent with what has been described above on other dimensions.

Session Dynamics

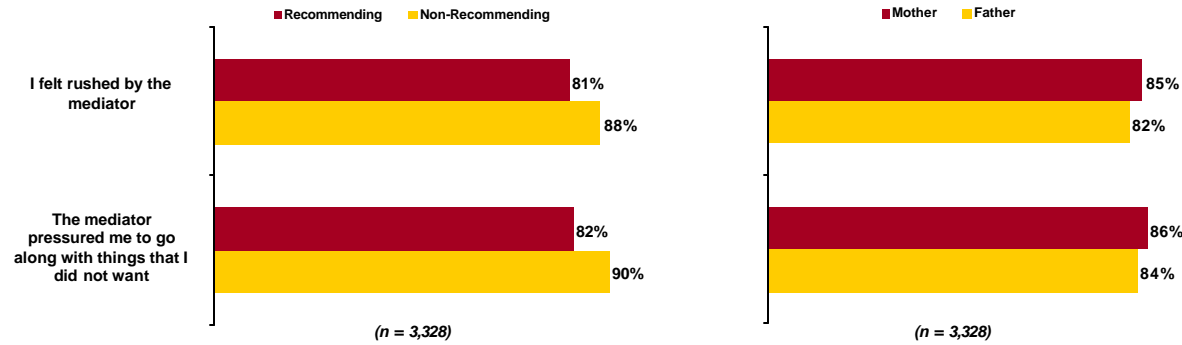
The session dynamics dimension taps into the interpersonal dynamics of the mediation session, both between the parents themselves and between the parents and the mediator. The predictors having the strongest impact on client feedback on these issues are parental role, service model, interparental violence, and the mediator's rating of case issue difficulty.

In terms of parental role, on three of the four component questions within the session dynamics dimension, mothers were more likely to provide positive feedback. On the remaining item, regarding feelings of safety during the mediation session, fathers were more likely to provide positive feedback. Returning to the question of whether the other

parent had an unfair advantage and controlling for power imbalances, the relationship to parental role may provide some valuable insight. It could be that client ratings are lower on this item than on other items on the session dynamics dimension because fathers believe that mothers are traditionally at an advantage in custody disputes, and not because the mediator was unable to establish a level playing field.

The relationship between service model and client feedback on the session dynamics dimension is consistent with those discussed in relation to other dimensions. Clients who experienced violence in their relationship with the other parent were less likely than those who did not to provide positive feedback on the session dynamics dimension. Additionally, as illustrated in Figure 7, as the mediator's rating of case issue difficulty increases, the likelihood of providing positive feedback decreases.

Figure 5. Percentage of Clients Providing Favorable Response on Process Issues Dimension by Service Model, Parental Role



Note: Because both statements are negatively worded, “disagree” is considered a favorable response.

Figure 6. Percentage of Clients Providing Favorable Response on Helpfulness Dimension by Number of Issues Raised About Parents, Marital Status, Legal Representation

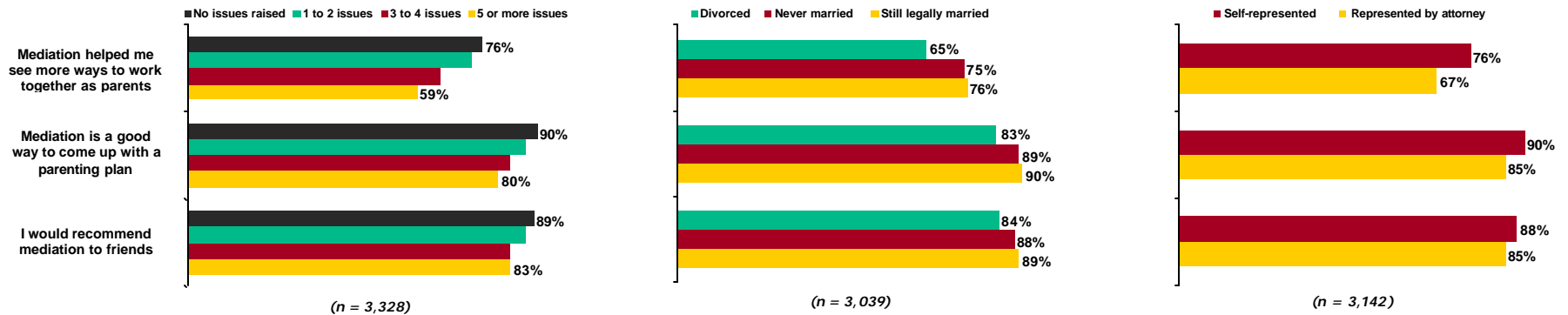
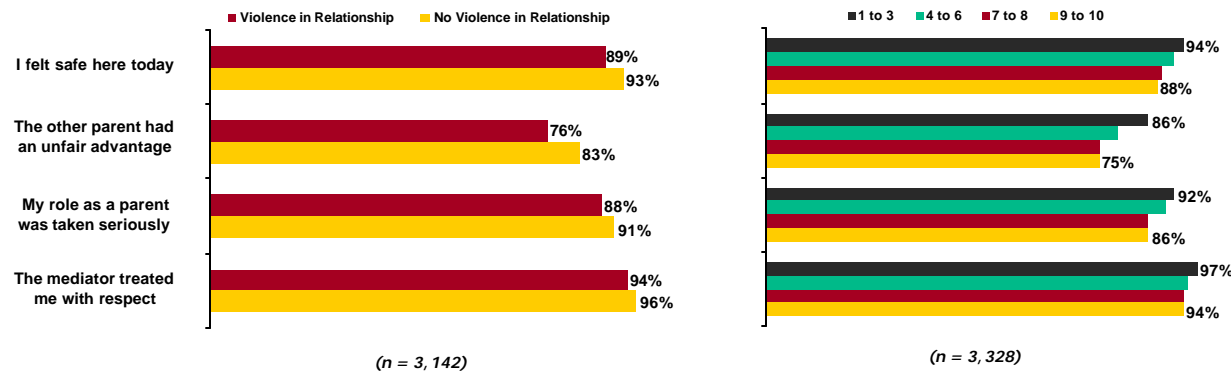


Figure 7. Percentage of Clients Providing Favorable Response on Session Dynamics Dimension by Interparental Violence, Case Issue Difficulty



Note: Because the statement “The other parent had an unfair advantage” is negatively worded, “disagree” is considered a favorable response.

Discussion of Analysis

The analysis revealed several important predictors of client feedback, including service model, number of issues raised about parents, legal representation, personal monthly income, marital status, and parental role. Factors that were found to have no meaningful relationship to client feedback included age, substance abuse by the parents, involvement of an infant or toddler in the custody dispute, and indicators of the size and resources of the county/court.

Client Feedback Is Multidimensional

The findings underscore the necessity of examining multiple dimensions of “client satisfaction” and not viewing it as a one-dimensional concept. For one, the factors most closely associated with client feedback tended to differ by dimension, as illustrated in Table 3. For example, interparental violence was a key predictor of client feedback on the session dynamics dimension, but was not found to be a significant predictor of feedback in terms of the session’s focus on the interests of the child.

Furthermore, on some dimensions responses were very consistent across all segments of the client population, while on other dimensions there was much more variation in responses across different client subgroups. Figures 8 through 11 illustrate the degree to which responses varied on each question, within each dimension.¹⁶ Clients provided very similar responses on the session dynamics dimension. Feedback on the helpfulness dimension, on the other hand, showed the widest variation among the client subgroups. This suggests that some aspects of mediation are experienced very differently by certain groups of clients, while other aspects are more universally experienced by all clients.

The Degree of Variation in Client Feedback Is Small

While the analysis illustrates some consistent and significant differences in feedback from different segments of the client population, it is extremely important to note that these differences are not particularly large. The results of logistic regression allow us to predict the probability of providing a favorable response to an item, given all of the client demographics, case characteristics, and county and court characteristics. For example, assume that there are two mothers with the same attributes except for service model.¹⁷ The mother in the recommending court has an 81 percent chance of providing favorable feedback on the statement regarding whether the client felt pressured, while the mother in

¹⁶ The solid line represents the overall percentage of clients who provided a favorable response, while the dots represent the percentage of clients within a given segment of the client population (e.g., mothers, clients without attorneys) who provided a favorable response. The more tightly the dots cluster around the line, the less variation—or the more consistency—in responses among the different client subgroups.

¹⁷ In this hypothetical, the two mothers are each 35 years old, white, high school graduates, with monthly incomes less than \$800, not divorced, without legal representation, in a county with a population of 1 million, in a court that conducts 5,000 mediation sessions per year and has a Family and Children Services budget of \$5 million, are not coming to mediation to modify existing custody orders, have experienced violence and substance abuse in their relationships with the other parent, do not have an infant or toddler, have cases that involve two issues about children and three issues about parents, and have case issues that are rated 7 out of 10 on the difficulty scale.

the nonrecommending court has a 91 percent chance of providing favorable feedback on this statement. Now assuming that these two mothers are both in recommending courts, a mother whose case involves only one issue about the parents has a 95 percent chance of providing favorable feedback on whether mediation is a good way to come up with a parenting plan; a mother whose case involves four issues has a 93 percent chance of providing favorable feedback on this item.

Moreover, as illustrated in Figures 8 through 11, the degree of variation in feedback among different groups of clients is not only small, but the variations are in ratings at the positive end of the scale. Looking at responses across all of the client subgroups, no less than 59 percent of clients provided positive feedback on any given item. On 10 of the 12 statements examined, 80 percent or more of clients within any given subgroup provided positive feedback. The fact that differences are both relatively small and at the positive end of the scale suggests that mediation services do not need to be dramatically altered in order to respond to lower levels of favorable feedback among certain client segments. Nonetheless, recognizing how different types of clients may react differently to the mediation process can be valuable for mediators and may suggest more modest or incremental changes that can be implemented to address the diverse needs of clients.

Other Factors May Have Greater Impact on Client Feedback

Overall, the 18 variables examined in the current analysis account for a very small proportion—ranging from 1.4 percent to 7.2 percent—of the variation in favorable client feedback. There may be other factors that haven't been explored, or that cannot be explored given the content of the SUSRS, that have a much stronger relationship to varying levels of favorable client feedback. Given the small amount of variation in client responses overall, however, it is unlikely that any regression model will satisfactorily explain the variation in the degree to which client feedback is favorable.

Figure 8. Variability of Responses on Process Issues Dimension¹⁸

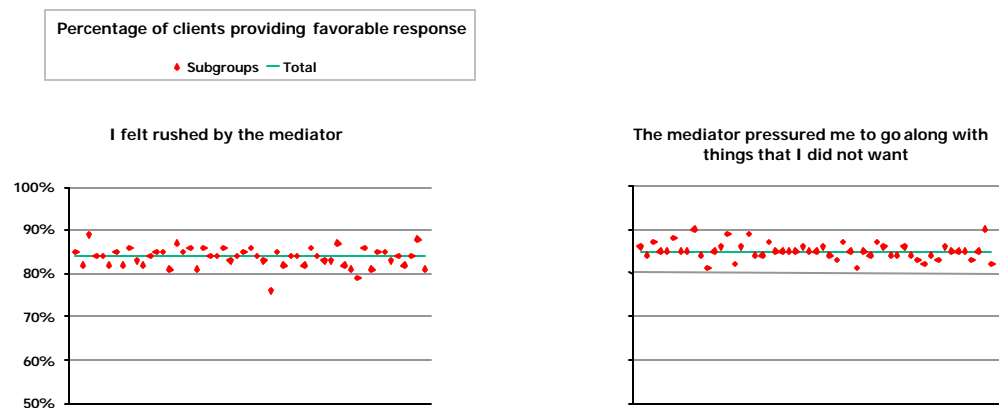
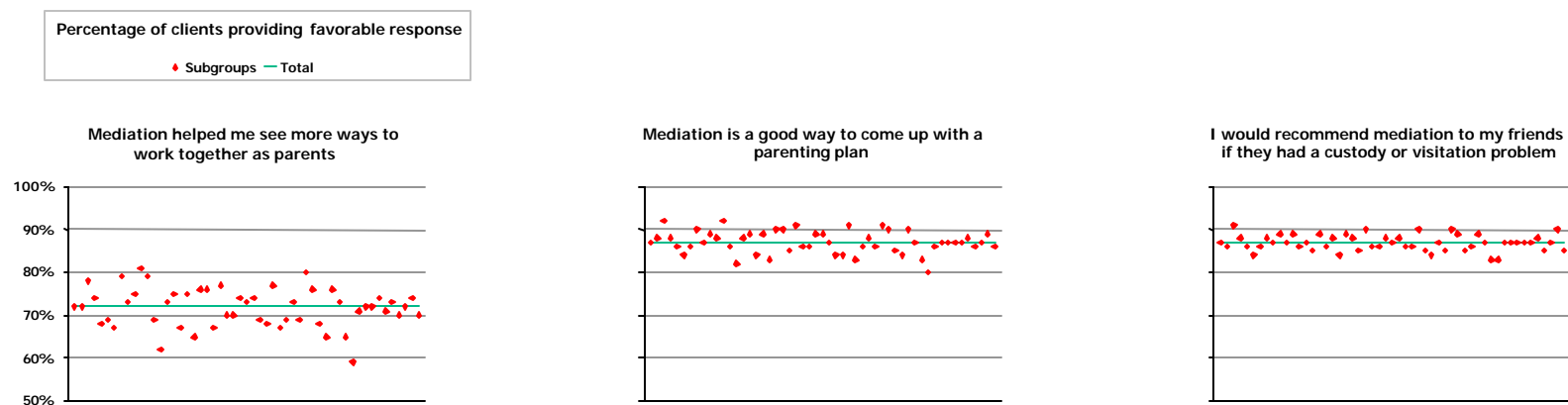


Figure 9. Variability of Responses on Helpfulness Dimension



¹⁸ See Appendix A for a detailed listing of the subgroups represented by the dots in Figures 8–11.

Figure 10. Variability of Responses on Focus on the Child Dimension

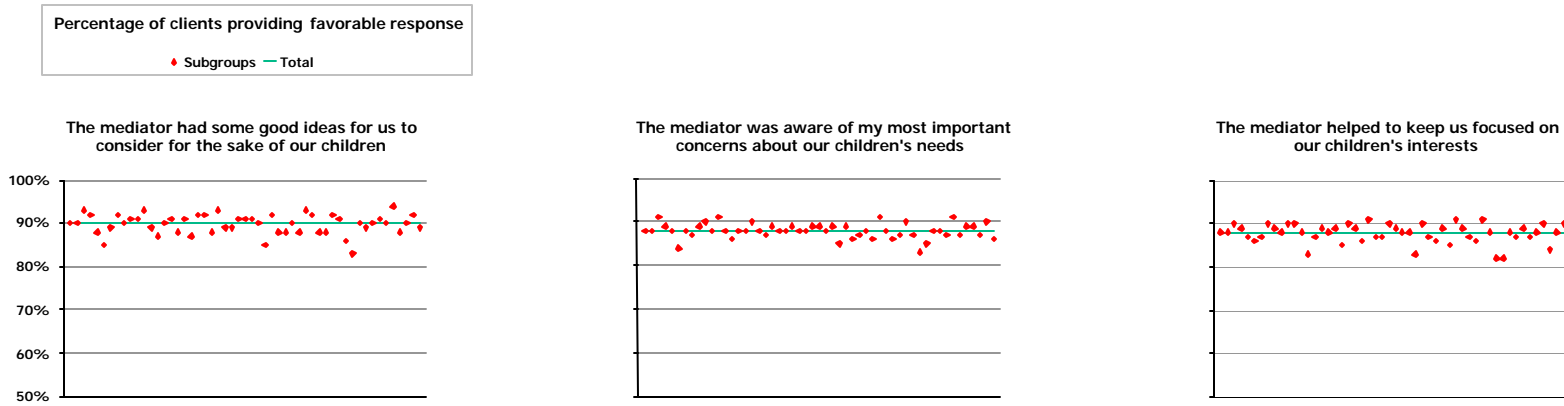


Figure 11. Variability of Responses on Session Dynamics Dimension



Conclusions and Implications for Practice

Overall, a high proportion of clients rated mediation favorably. On each of the four dimensions examined, an average of over 80 percent of parents provided positive feedback. Feedback was particularly positive on the dimensions of the session's focus on the child and interpersonal dynamics. These findings suggest that mediation is both a needed and beneficial service for parents with child custody disputes.

With surveys related to client satisfaction such as the Parent Viewpoint survey, there is often concern that clients who are happier with the service are more likely to fill out the survey, thereby skewing the results toward the positive end. As previously mentioned, 67 percent of the parents who completed the Client Profile also completed the Parent Viewpoint, which is a high response rate. Even if the 33 percent of clients who did not complete the Parent Viewpoint were unhappy with their experiences in mediation, client feedback would still likely be positive overall.

Access to Resources, Expectations, and Client Feedback

Examination of the various factors associated with client feedback reveals a tendency for clients with fewer resources—those at lower levels of educational attainment and those without attorneys—to rate their experiences in mediation more favorably than other clients. These are among the most needy clients, who have little or no other help available to them, so they may find mediation to be an especially valuable forum for resolving their disputes. Since these clients generally have more limited access to information, they may require additional resources to address their needs. This confirms the current efforts of local family court services programs to maintain or add services that provide clients with more information, such as mediation orientation or parenting programs and referrals for counseling or other post-mediation services. It also affirms the value of networking and collaborating with related services, such as self-help centers, access to visitation programs, co-parenting resources, and other social services. In times when resources are dwindling, it is especially important for courts to consider expanding their community partnerships.

Furthermore, client satisfaction is often defined as the gap between one's expectations of a service and the perceived performance of the service.¹⁹ Clients with legal representation may be less likely to provide positive feedback because they are being coached by their attorneys in terms of what to demand and what to agree to, which in turn could raise their expectations about the mediation process. Alternatively, feedback may be so positive among clients with fewer resources because they entered into the mediation process with more modest expectations. As such, in order to address varying levels of favorable client feedback, realistically influencing clients' expectations—providing them with verbal or written information about what they can reasonably anticipate in terms of both process

¹⁹ Fountain, J. E. (2001). Paradoxes of public sector customer service. *Governance: An International Journal of Policy and Administration*, 14 (1) 55–73.

and outcome—may be as important as, or more important than, making more substantive changes to mediation services.^{20,21}

One way to address clients' expectations is through enhancing or expanding parent orientation and education about the mediation process. It is important for parents to enter into the process having a realistic sense, and moreover a shared understanding, of what they will and will not be able to accomplish through mediation and how they can most effectively work with the mediator. For example, they should not see mediation as an opportunity to work on reconciliation or to seek vindication from allegations. They should be aware that the mediation will be more focused on the interests of the child and on crafting a parenting a parenting plan than on working through their own emotional issues related to the breakup of the relationship. Another key point to address with parents is that one mediation session will not be a magic bullet. As circumstances change, it is quite possible that they will need to return to mediation to modify their parenting plans. Finally, the information provided to parents should be concrete, not abstract; it should help them understand how the mediation process works in their particular county or court.

In order to realistically influence clients' expectations, it is important that they receive orientation and/or education prior to the mediation session. However, due to the highly emotional nature of the process and its impact on the clients' ability to absorb or be receptive to the information they are receiving, it may be important to reinforce this education at several points in time. It may also be necessary to consider providing the information in different forms—verbally, in writing, through video, etc.—because of individual differences in processing the same information.

In addition to enhancing orientation and education for parents, the issue of client expectations could be addressed through mediator training. Mediators may benefit from workshops or other training opportunities that explore what parents' expectations are when they enter into the mediation process and how those expectations may shape parents' experiences in mediation.

Complex or Difficult Cases and Client Feedback

In-depth analysis of client feedback also shows a general trend for clients to provide less positive feedback when they are involved in complex or difficult cases (cases involving divorced parents, numerous issues raised about parents, and/or high case issue difficulty). There are several reasons why feedback may be less favorable among these clients. When the issues are more complex, parents may become more polarized, making it even more challenging to work with them to develop a parenting plan. In cases involving serious allegations, the nonoffending parent may be appalled that the perpetrator is even entitled to mediation and may therefore be unwilling to fully engage in or see the utility of the

²⁰ Heskett, J., Sasser, W., and Hart, C. (1990). *Service breakthroughs: Changing the rules of the game*. New York: Free Press.

²¹ Donovan, N., Brown, J., and Bellulo, L. (2001). Satisfaction with public services: A discussion paper. United Kingdom Cabinet Office, Performance and Innovation Unit.

process. The existence of allegations may also place the parents into more of an adversarial framework, where they are more inclined to want to prove their sides of the case than to work together.

There is also an important time element in dealing with complex or difficult cases. Parents are being asked to look at a lot of issues in a relatively short period of time, and they may not be equipped to deal with them, especially given the often high level of emotion that these types of cases involve. When there are a lot of issues to work through, parents may be less likely to feel that they really accomplished something in mediation.

Less favorable feedback among clients involved in complex or difficult cases raises questions of how complex and difficult cases can be effectively addressed—either prior to, during, after, or by means other than mediation—and how, in turn, positive feedback may be increased. Because acrimony tends to be higher in these cases, it may take the mediator some time to work with the parents to break down those feelings to the point where the parents are able to work together. In order for mediation to be truly productive, complex or difficult cases would benefit from additional mediation time, ideally in the form of multiple sessions, so different issues could be addressed at different times. Parents would then have more time to process and reflect on what happened during the prior session and would likely be more prepared to handle the next session, as well as the more entrenched issues. The number and/or length of the mediation session could be determined in proportion to the number of issues involved in the case.

Mediation also may be a less than ideal solution for complex or difficult cases. Mediators indicate that in cases where there are so many red flags, the possibility of productive mediation is really precluded, and evaluation or some other service may be more appropriate. More extensive assessment and triage would allow family court services staff to tailor services to the individual needs of parents. This would likely be a more efficient use of resources than fitting all cases into the approach of mediation and may allow for more extensive mediation for those who would really benefit from it. It is also consistent with a broader trend toward assessment and triage in court-based programs and services. Furthermore, it may be preferable to refer parents not to mediation specifically, but to family court services, where a menu of different options for resolving their custody disputes would be available to them.

Because family court services staff see families who were previously unable to come to an agreement on their own, all family disputes in court-based child custody mediation could be considered, to some extent, complex or difficult. However, given that indicators of case complexity or difficulty seem to be so strongly associated with varying levels of favorable client feedback, it is important to consider providing different types or levels of service depending on the nature and extent of issues involved a given case. This supports the current efforts of family court services to expand programs and provide a range of services to mediation clients.

Service Model and Client Feedback

On a fairly consistent basis, clients in nonrecommending courts provided more positive feedback than those in recommending courts. As previously discussed, results should be interpreted with caution due to the wide variation in mediation practice from county to county that may be masked by the very broad categories of service model and due to the fact that respondents were not asked to specifically assess the service model used in their mediation session. In terms of process issues, it is possible that clients feel more rushed or pressured in recommending courts because they get less time in mediation, not because of the potential for a recommendation to be made to the judge. It may also be that mediators in some recommending courts feel compelled, if they sense early in the mediation session that parents will not be able to come to an agreement, to shift the emphasis to fact-finding. In complex or difficult cases especially, it may be more difficult for the mediator to fully address all the issues involved in the case given time constraints when a recommendation is being made.

In terms of the session's focus on the child, it could be that there is more of an opportunity to focus on the needs and interests of the children in nonrecommending courts because there is not a need, in cases that do not reach agreement, to engage in the fact-finding required to make a recommendation. The relationship between service model and session dynamics, however, is somewhat unclear. Finally, it is important to note that service model does not appear to be related to clients' views of the helpfulness of mediation.

Facilitating Communication Between Parents

One survey item on which feedback was notably less positive, and on which there was a greater degree of variation among different client subgroups, was "Mediation helped me see more ways to work together as parents." This suggests that, at least for certain types of clients, the goal of facilitating communication and reducing acrimony between parents (as outlined in rule 5.210 of the California Rules of Court) may not be as realistic as other goals of mediation, like developing a parenting plan and ensuring the health, safety, and welfare of the child. It may be difficult for parents to reconcile working together when they are trying to be apart. At the point in time when many parents go to mediation, they have not had a chance to process all of their emotions related to the breakup of the relationship, let alone set them aside. It may be unreasonable to expect parents to communicate effectively and cooperate with one another under these circumstances. Even if they are provided with extensive education, they may not be able to view working together as realistic or beneficial until they are in the appropriate emotional space to focus on their co-parenting skills.

Furthermore, court-based mediation tends to be very task focused. The emphasis is on the immediate, practical issues of how time with children will be shared and how decisions about their health and welfare will be made. That in itself can be a very time-consuming and intensive process, and there may be little if any time left to address the parents' emotional issues or work on developing their co-parenting skills.

In complex or difficult cases, it may be more challenging to guide the parents to a hope that they can learn to communicate briefly, civilly, and with a focus on issues related to their children. In domestic violence cases, it may be inadvisable or logistically difficult to foster communication given the circumstances and restrictions relating to safety and restraining orders. It should be pointed out, however, that the majority of clients surveyed, regardless of subgroup, still rated this aspect of mediation favorably.

Procedural Justice Is an Important Component of Client Feedback

Custody mediation research is often focused on outcomes such as settlement rates or agreement rates. This type of research overlooks the benefits that may be realized from the mediation process regardless of the outcome. According to the concept of procedural justice, being treated with dignity and respect and having the opportunity to voice one's concerns are key components of people's sense of fairness about a process and their willingness to accept and comply with the ultimate outcome. The results of the Parent Viewpoint survey demonstrate that client feedback on items related to procedural justice (being treated with respect, being taken seriously, the mediator being aware of the parent's concerns) is extremely positive. However, these types of issues are often not taken into account in discussions of the effectiveness of custody mediation, which is unfortunate because they demonstrate that mediation can be beneficial even to those parents who did not get the agreement they were seeking.

Directions for Future Research

As previously discussed, there may be factors other than those explored in this research update—and more generally, other than those explored in the SUSRS—that have more of an influence on client feedback. Findings on the process issues dimension, and to some extent the helpfulness dimension, suggest that varying levels of favorable client feedback may be a function of the time spent in mediation. Clients may feel more rushed or pressured if they spend less time in mediation. They may feel that mediation did not help them find more ways to work with the other parent because the mediator had to focus more on the specific issues involved in the case and less on facilitating communication between parents. It would be interesting to explore how favorable client feedback varies with the length of the mediation session, taking into account the number and complexity of issues to be addressed.

Another theme that surfaced in the analysis was parents' "readiness" for mediation. Variables related to this theme may include time since separation, the level of acrimony or emotionality between the parents, and the extent to which the parents had any counseling or therapy prior to their separation. It is likely that the more time parents have had to work through the grief and other emotions brought on by the breakup of the relationship, the more they will be able to benefit from mediation, and, in turn, the more likely they will be to provide positive feedback. It may be that parents are better able to focus on developing co-parenting skills, and more generally can see the potential benefits to mediation, as more time has elapsed since the end of their relationship. The level of acrimony between parents may be a good proxy for their willingness to work together.

Finally, if parents have previously gone through counseling or therapy, they may feel more at ease in the mediation setting.

Characterizing a program's services by the broad recommending/nonrecommending dichotomy serves to mask complex county-to-county differences in the services provided by family court services. Counties provide varying levels of orientation, parent education, and other such services, so it may be important to take into account the full spectrum of services provided or available to the client. Examining how client feedback varies given the range of services provided may shed more light on the findings. In particular, it may be beneficial to examine the extent to which services were "front-loaded" for the client. It could be that the more work that is done in advance to prepare parents for mediation, the more likely they are to have realistic expectations about what can be accomplished in mediation, which may result in more positive feedback.

Additionally, to gain a deeper understanding of how client feedback is related to participating in mediation in a recommending or nonrecommending service model, it would be beneficial to ask clients to specifically assess the service model used in their mediation session. It may also be important to factor in when the recommendation was received in relation to when parents completed the survey. They may be less inclined to provide positive feedback if they know what the recommendation will be, particularly if it does not favor them.

In October 2003, a new wave of the SUSRS was completed, and many of the questions on the 1999 Parent Viewpoint survey were repeated in 2003. Between 1999 and 2003, family court services programs have expanded their services in an attempt to address the new populations and new issues they are seeing. This new data will provide an opportunity to examine whether and how client feedback and the factors associated with it have changed over time.

Appendix A. Univariate Frequencies for Independent Variables

Table A1. Client Demographics

| | Number | Percent | | Number | Percent |
|--------------------------|---------------|----------------|--------------------------------|---------------|----------------|
| <i>Parental role</i> | | | <i>Personal monthly income</i> | | |
| Mother | 1,723 | 52% | Less than \$800 | 794 | 26% |
| Father | 1,605 | 48% | \$800 to 1,999 | 1,224 | 40% |
| Total | 3,328 | 100% | \$2,000 or more | 714 | 23% |
| <i>Age</i> | | | Missing | 307 | 10% |
| 14 to 24 | 372 | 12% | Total | 3,039 | 100% |
| 25 to 34 | 1,192 | 39% | <i>Marital status</i> | | |
| 35 to 44 | 1,047 | 34% | Never married | 958 | 32% |
| 45 and over | 257 | 8% | Divorced | 940 | 31% |
| Missing | 171 | 6% | Still legally married | 1,052 | 35% |
| Total | 3,039 | 100% | Missing | 89 | 3% |
| <i>Race/ethnicity</i> | | | Total | 3,039 | 100% |
| Non-Hispanic white | 1,519 | 50% | <i>Legal representation</i> | | |
| Hispanic | 850 | 28% | Represented by attorney | 1,449 | 46% |
| Black | 227 | 7% | Self-represented | 1,611 | 51% |
| Other | 313 | 10% | Missing | 82 | 3% |
| Missing | 130 | 4% | Total | 3,142 | 100% |
| Total | 3,039 | 100% | | | |
| <i>Education</i> | | | | | |
| No high school diploma | 391 | 13% | | | |
| High school diploma/GED | 759 | 25% | | | |
| Some college | 1,357 | 45% | | | |
| College degree or higher | 404 | 13% | | | |
| Missing | 128 | 4% | | | |
| Total | 3,039 | 100% | | | |

Note: Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

Explanation of totals: Counselor Report and Parent Viewpoint surveys were completed for 3,328 clients. Of those, 3,039 had a corresponding Client Profile. The total is higher than 3,039 for legal representation because where a client's information was missing, the information regarding their representation status provided by the other parent (where available) was substituted.

Table A2. Case Characteristics

| Reported by Client | | Reported by Mediator | | | |
|---|---------------|-----------------------------|--|---------------|----------------|
| | Number | Percent | | Number | Percent |
| <i>Interparental violence</i> | | | <i>Initial or modified orders</i> | | |
| No | 750 | 24% | Initial orders | 1,453 | 44% |
| Yes | 2,347 | 75% | Modified orders | 1,142 | 34% |
| Missing | 45 | 1% | No custody orders sought | 707 | 21% |
| Total | 3,142 | 100% | Missing | 26 | 1% |
| <i>Infant/toddler involved in dispute</i> | | | Total | 3,328 | 100% |
| No | 1,812 | 60% | <i>Substance abuse</i> | | |
| Yes | 1,058 | 35% | No | 2,523 | 76% |
| Missing | 169 | 6% | Yes | 805 | 24% |
| Total | 3,039 | 100% | Total | 3,328 | 100% |
| <i>Number of issues about children</i> | | | <i>Case issue difficulty</i> | | |
| None | 1,554 | 51% | 1 (not at all difficult) to 3 | 541 | 16% |
| One | 708 | 23% | 4 to 6 | 897 | 27% |
| Two | 384 | 13% | 7 to 8 | 1,132 | 34% |
| Three or more | 393 | 13% | 9 to 10 (extremely difficult) | 686 | 21% |
| Total | 3,039 | 100% | Missing | 72 | 2% |
| | | | Total | 3,328 | 100% |
| | | | <i>Number of issues raised about parents</i> | | |
| | | | None | 1,507 | 45% |
| | | | 1 to 2 | 1,023 | 31% |
| | | | 3 to 4 | 539 | 16% |
| | | | 5 or more | 259 | 8% |
| | | | Total | 3,328 | 100% |

Note: Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

Explanation of totals: Counselor Report and Parent Viewpoint surveys were completed for 3,328 clients. Of those, 3,039 had a corresponding Client Profile. The total is higher than 3,039 for interparental violence because where a client's information was missing, the information regarding violence in their relationship provided by the other parent (where available) was substituted.

Table A3. County and Court Characteristics

| | Number | Percent |
|--|---------------|----------------|
| <i>County population, 1999</i> | | |
| Less than 200,000 | 346 | 10% |
| 200,000 to 999,999 | 1,185 | 36% |
| 1 million or more | 1,797 | 54% |
| Total | 3,328 | 100% |
| <i>Number of annual mediations, 1999</i> | | |
| Less than 1,000 | 536 | 16% |
| 1,000 or more | 2,792 | 84% |
| Total | 3,328 | 100% |
| <i>Family and Children Services Budget, FY 2001–2002</i> | | |
| Under \$500,000 | 271 | 8% |
| \$500,000 to \$999,999 | 352 | 11% |
| \$1 million or more | 2,705 | 81% |
| Total | 3,328 | 100% |
| <i>Service model</i> | | |
| Nonrecommending | 1,268 | 38% |
| Recommending | 2,060 | 62% |
| Total | 3,328 | 100% |

Notes: Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

Figures represent the number and percentage of clients in courts with the above characteristics.

Appendix B. Methodology

Measures Included in and Excluded From the Analysis

On the Parent Viewpoint survey, respondents were asked to rate 20 different statements on a four-point scale (strongly agree, agree, disagree, strongly disagree). Of these, 12 statements were examined in the final analysis. Four statements were excluded because they asked respondents for feedback on agreements or recommendations, and the survey did not include a skip pattern that directed people to not respond to that set of questions if they did not reach agreement or did not get a recommendation. Therefore, it is unclear what is the appropriate base population for this set of questions. Similarly, three questions were excluded because they dealt with orientation, and people who did not receive orientation were not instructed to skip out of the question. Finally, the statement “I would have felt more comfortable with a mediator from my own background” was not analyzed because it was a very different type of question and did not fit in well with the four dimensions examined, and because correlates of client feedback on this measure were likely to differ from those on other measures.

Description of Selected Variables

Several variables were constructed from responses to more than one survey question. More detailed descriptions of those variables are provided below.

Legal representation. Clients were asked whether they personally had an attorney, as well as whether the other parent involved in the mediation had an attorney, at the time of the mediation. In cases where one parent’s response was missing, the other parent’s response, if available, was substituted.

Interparental violence. The mother, the father, or both parents report one or more of the following in their relationship: physical violence; threats of violence; pushing, grabbing, shoving, throwing things, slapping, kicking, biting, or hitting; sexual assault; use of a weapon; or a current or past restraining order.

Number of issues about children. Parents were asked to choose from a list of the following issues they wished to discuss about their children in the mediation session: behavior problems, emotional adjustment, medical needs, school problems, refusal to visit, and safety.

Number of issues raised about parents. The mediator was asked to choose from a list of issues raised by one parent about the other parent either before or during the mediation session: child abduction and neglect, domestic violence, maligning the other parent in front of the child, harassing the other parent, psychological disorder, drug or alcohol abuse, stalking the other parent, physical abuse of child, sexual abuse of child, and emotional abuse of child.

Initial or modified orders. The mediator was asked whether the purpose of the session was to establish initial orders or modify existing orders, or whether custody was not an issue, in regard to legal custody, physical custody, and primary residence. If any or all of

the orders were to be modified, the case was assigned to the “modified orders” category. If the purpose of the session was to establish initial orders only, the case was assigned to the “initial orders” category.

Explanation of Regression Analysis

Logistic regression with a binary dependent variable was used to explore the impact of client characteristics, case characteristics, and county and court characteristics on client feedback. The dependent variable indicated whether or not the client provided a favorable response to a given statement. As previously mentioned, “strongly agree” and “agree” were collapsed into a general “agree” category and “strongly disagree” and “disagree” were collapsed into a general “disagree” category in order to create a binary dependent variable to facilitate the analysis. For negatively worded statements—e.g., “I felt rushed by the mediator”—“disagree” was considered the favorable response. One regression was run for each of the 12 statements analyzed. Further details on the independent and dependent variables used in the regression analysis are outlined in Table B1.

In determining which variables had the strongest impact on client feedback within each dimension, a score was calculated for each variable based on its significance (using a cutoff point of $p < .10$) and on its relative predictive power (as indicated by the standardized coefficient, B^*) on the individual items within the dimension. The results of the logistic regression analysis are detailed in Tables B2 through B13.

Interpreting Regression Results

The regression coefficient, B , in logistic regression indicates the amount of change in the dependent variable—in this case the probability of providing a favorable response to a given statement—that accompanies a one-unit increase in the independent variable. A negative sign indicates that as the value of the independent variable increases, the value of the dependent variable, or the likelihood of providing a positive response, decreases.²² SE is the standard error of the regression coefficient. The p -value is a measure of statistical significance that indicates the probability that the coefficient would have been produced by random chance. (Coefficients with a p -value of less than .10 were considered significant.)

Because the independent variables are measured in different units (for example, the range for the mediator’s rating of case issue difficulty is 1 to 10, while the range for number of annual mediations is 26 to 19,006), it is not possible to examine the magnitude of the effects of different variables relative to one another using the regression coefficients. In order to make such comparisons, the regression coefficient is multiplied by the standard deviation of the corresponding variable to produce the standardized coefficient, B^* . The independent variable having the standardized coefficient with the highest absolute value has the strongest impact on the dependent variable, relative to the other variables included in the model.

²² For categorical variables, such as legal representation, an increase in the independent variables means moving from the absence of a characteristic to the presence of a characteristic.

The logistic regression results include one additional statistic, the exponential of the regression coefficient ($\exp(B)$), or the odds ratio. The odds ratio reflects the change in the odds of providing positive feedback corresponding to a one-unit increase in the independent variable. An odds ratio greater than 1 indicates that the odds increase with an increase in the independent variable, while an odds ratio less than indicates that the odds decrease.

The R^2 statistic, which represents the proportion of variation in the dependent variable that is accounted for by all of the independent variables in the model, provides an indication of how well the regression model explains varying levels of client feedback. Additionally, the coefficients can be plugged into the regression equation to calculate the predicted probability of providing positive feedback. As such, another statistic that reflects the predictive power of the model is the percentage of cases for which the model correctly predicts the value of the dependent variable. These statistics are also included in Tables B2 through B13.

Table B1. Regression Model Summary

| | Variable | Coding Notes |
|-------------------------------------|---|--|
| Dependent | Feedback on each of 12 statements about the mediation session | binary dependent variable, coded 1 for favorable response (in most cases, agree and strongly agree) and 0 for unfavorable response |
| Independent | Parental role | dummy variable, coded 1 for mother |
| | Age | continuous variable |
| | Race/ethnicity | used three dummy variables for black, Hispanic, and other; non-Hispanic white is the reference category |
| | Education | used three dummy variables for no high school diploma, high school diploma/GED, and some college; college degree or higher is the reference category |
| | Personal monthly income | used two dummy variables for less than \$800 and \$800–\$1,999; \$2,000 or more is the reference category |
| | Marital status | dummy variable, coded 1 for divorced |
| | Legal representation | dummy variable, coded 1 for represented |
| | Interparental violence | dummy variable, coded 1 if parent(s) reported violence |
| | Infant or toddler involved in custody dispute | dummy variable, coded 1 if family has child age 3 years or less |
| | Number of issues about children | ranges from 0 to 6 |
| | Initial or modified orders | dummy variable, coded 1 if returning for modifications |
| | Substance abuse | dummy variable, coded 1 if drug or alcohol abuse raised as issue |
| | Case issue difficulty | rated on a scale from 1 to 10, 1 being “not difficult at all” and 10 being “extremely difficult” |
| | Number of issues raised about parents | ranges from 0 to 11 |
| | County population | continuous variable |
| Number of annual mediations | continuous variable | |
| Family and Children Services budget | continuous variable | |
| Service model | dummy variable, coded 1 for recommending | |

Table B2. Logistic Regression Results: I felt rushed by the mediator

| Parameter | B | SE | p-value | B* | exp(B) |
|--|----------|---------|---------|---------|--------|
| (intercept) | 3.3952 | 0.5290 | <. 0001 | ----- | 29.819 |
| Mother | 0.3299 | 0.1336 | 0.0135 | 0.0909 | 1.391 |
| Age | -0.0141 | 0.0095 | 0.1405 | -0.0609 | 0.986 |
| Hispanic | -0.3356 | 0.1514 | 0.0266 | -0.0823 | 0.715 |
| Black | -0.1623 | 0.2533 | 0.5218 | -0.0240 | 0.850 |
| Other race/ethnicity | -0.1242 | 0.2074 | 0.5493 | -0.0210 | 0.883 |
| Less than high school diploma | -0.2695 | 0.2549 | 0.2904 | -0.0486 | 0.764 |
| High school diploma | -0.1412 | 0.2190 | 0.5190 | -0.0339 | 0.868 |
| Some college | -0.0262 | 0.1908 | 0.8907 | -0.0072 | 0.974 |
| Income < \$800/month | -0.3927 | 0.1778 | 0.0272 | -0.0978 | 0.675 |
| Income \$800–1,999/month | 0.1752 | 0.1626 | 0.2812 | 0.0479 | 1.191 |
| Divorced | -0.4174 | 0.1457 | 0.0042 | -0.1073 | 0.659 |
| Represented by attorney | -0.3158 | 0.1314 | 0.0162 | -0.0870 | 0.729 |
| County population | -2.93E-8 | 1.13E-7 | 0.7946 | -0.0547 | 1.000 |
| Number of annual mediations | 3.50E-5 | 5.60E-5 | 0.5270 | 0.1240 | 1.000 |
| Family and Children Services budget | -1.64E-8 | 3.36E-8 | 0.6258 | -0.0655 | 1.000 |
| Recommending court | -0.4282 | 0.1923 | 0.0260 | -0.1136 | 0.652 |
| Modified orders sought | 0.0139 | 0.1382 | 0.9198 | 0.0037 | 1.014 |
| Case involves interparental violence | 0.0180 | 0.1558 | 0.9079 | 0.0042 | 1.018 |
| Case involves substance abuse | 0.0656 | 0.1653 | 0.6915 | 0.0154 | 1.068 |
| Case involves infant/toddler | -0.1905 | 0.1492 | 0.2016 | -0.0508 | 0.827 |
| Number of issues raised about children | -0.1888 | 0.0444 | <. 0001 | -0.1344 | 0.828 |
| Case issue difficulty rating | -0.0105 | 0.0278 | 0.7067 | -0.0144 | 0.990 |
| Number of issues raised about parents | -0.0506 | 0.0414 | 0.2220 | -0.0500 | 0.951 |

Total cases included in analysis: 2,345

R²: 0.0317

Predicted vs. observed values: 65.1% correct

Table B3. Logistic Regression Results: The mediator pressured me to go along with things that I did not want

| Parameter | B | SE | p-value | B* | exp(B) |
|--|----------|---------|---------|---------|--------|
| (intercept) | 3.4548 | 0.5689 | <. 0001 | ----- | 31.653 |
| Mother | 0.3297 | 0.1393 | 0.0179 | 0.0908 | 1.391 |
| Age | -0.0048 | 0.0101 | 0.6361 | -0.0207 | 0.995 |
| Hispanic | -0.1355 | 0.1599 | 0.3967 | -0.0332 | 0.873 |
| Black | 0.1287 | 0.2828 | 0.6490 | 0.0190 | 1.137 |
| Other race/ethnicity | -0.0087 | 0.2197 | 0.9685 | -0.0015 | 0.991 |
| Less than high school diploma | -0.2857 | 0.2736 | 0.2965 | -0.0512 | 0.752 |
| High school diploma | -0.1311 | 0.2366 | 0.5796 | -0.0314 | 0.877 |
| Some college | -0.0710 | 0.2106 | 0.7362 | -0.0195 | 0.931 |
| Income < \$800/month | -0.5616 | 0.1980 | 0.0046 | -0.1398 | 0.570 |
| Income \$800–1,999/month | -0.2866 | 0.1780 | 0.1073 | -0.0785 | 0.751 |
| Divorced | -0.2545 | 0.1550 | 0.1006 | -0.0654 | 0.775 |
| Represented by attorney | -0.2492 | 0.1373 | 0.0695 | -0.0687 | 0.779 |
| County population | -4.72E-8 | 1.17E-7 | 0.6860 | -0.0877 | 1.000 |
| Number of annual mediations | -2.00E-5 | 5.80E-5 | 0.7504 | -0.0649 | 1.000 |
| Family and Children Services budget | 3.42E-8 | 3.89E-8 | 0.3790 | 0.1364 | 1.000 |
| Recommending court | -0.8464 | 0.2186 | 0.0001 | -0.2242 | 0.429 |
| Modified orders sought | 0.0608 | 0.1458 | 0.6766 | 0.0160 | 1.063 |
| Case involves interparental violence | 0.0881 | 0.1630 | 0.5887 | 0.0206 | 1.092 |
| Case involves substance abuse | 0.0207 | 0.1712 | 0.9036 | 0.0049 | 1.021 |
| Case involves infant/toddler | -0.1766 | 0.1549 | 0.2540 | -0.0470 | 0.838 |
| Number of issues raised about children | -0.0227 | 0.0505 | 0.6534 | -0.0161 | 0.978 |
| Case issue difficulty rating | -0.0259 | 0.0291 | 0.3734 | -0.0357 | 0.974 |
| Number of issues raised about parents | -0.0589 | 0.0433 | 0.1736 | -0.0583 | 0.943 |

Total cases included in analysis: 2,324

R²: 0.0258

Predicted vs. observed values: 63.3% correct

Table B4. Logistic Regression Results: Mediation helped me see more ways to work together as parents

| Parameter | B | SE | p-value | B [*] | exp(B) |
|--|----------|---------|---------|----------------|--------|
| (intercept) | 0.9900 | 0.4255 | < .0001 | ----- | 2.691 |
| Mother | 0.1733 | 0.1072 | 0.1060 | 0.0478 | 1.189 |
| Age | 0.0157 | 0.0080 | 0.0480 | 0.0680 | 1.016 |
| Hispanic | 0.3677 | 0.1296 | 0.0045 | 0.0905 | 1.444 |
| Black | 0.1435 | 0.2029 | 0.4795 | 0.0212 | 1.154 |
| Other race/ethnicity | 0.4702 | 0.1765 | 0.0077 | 0.0794 | 1.600 |
| Less than high school diploma | 0.8571 | 0.2217 | 0.0001 | 0.1554 | 2.356 |
| High school diploma | 0.6578 | 0.1729 | 0.0001 | 0.1580 | 1.931 |
| Some college | 0.3054 | 0.1433 | 0.0331 | 0.0841 | 1.357 |
| Income < \$800/month | 0.0348 | 0.1484 | 0.8146 | 0.0087 | 1.035 |
| Income \$800–1,999/month | 0.1279 | 0.1271 | 0.3142 | 0.0350 | 1.136 |
| Divorced | -0.3918 | 0.1178 | 0.0009 | -0.1010 | 0.676 |
| Represented by attorney | -0.3959 | 0.1060 | 0.0002 | -0.1091 | 0.673 |
| County population | 9.93E-9 | 9.24E-8 | 0.9144 | 0.0183 | 1.000 |
| Number of annual mediations | -3.00E-5 | 4.50E-5 | 0.5658 | -0.0905 | 1.000 |
| Family and Children Services budget | 2.85E-8 | 2.74E-8 | 0.2969 | 0.1129 | 1.000 |
| Recommending court | 0.0435 | 0.1468 | 0.7671 | 0.0115 | 1.044 |
| Modified orders sought | -0.2621 | 0.1101 | 0.0173 | -0.0688 | 0.769 |
| Case involves interparental violence | -0.2876 | 0.1301 | 0.0271 | -0.0674 | 0.750 |
| Case involves substance abuse | 0.1880 | 0.1346 | 0.1626 | 0.0440 | 1.207 |
| Case involves infant/toddler | 0.0486 | 0.1210 | 0.6881 | 0.0129 | 1.050 |
| Number of issues raised about children | -0.0007 | 0.0392 | 0.9869 | -0.0005 | 0.999 |
| Case issue difficulty rating | -0.0688 | 0.0228 | 0.0026 | -0.0950 | 0.934 |
| Number of issues raised about parents | -0.1353 | 0.0330 | < .0001 | -0.1334 | 0.873 |

Total cases included in analysis: 2,303

R²: .0722

Predicted vs. observed values: 67.8% correct

Table B5. Logistic Regression Results: Mediation is a good way to come up with a parenting plan

| Parameter | B | SE | p-value | B [*] | exp(B) |
|--|----------|---------|---------|----------------|--------|
| (intercept) | 2.9015 | 0.5994 | < .0001 | ----- | 18.201 |
| Mother | 0.1020 | 0.1518 | 0.5017 | 0.0281 | 1.107 |
| Age | 0.0061 | 0.0110 | 0.5793 | 0.0265 | 1.006 |
| Hispanic | 0.3710 | 0.1917 | 0.0530 | 0.0911 | 1.449 |
| Black | -0.2087 | 0.2652 | 0.4313 | -0.0309 | 0.812 |
| Other race/ethnicity | 0.2993 | 0.2498 | 0.2309 | 0.0507 | 1.349 |
| Less than high school diploma | 0.1981 | 0.2943 | 0.5009 | 0.0360 | 1.219 |
| High school diploma | 0.5259 | 0.2473 | 0.0335 | 0.1267 | 1.692 |
| Some college | 0.1806 | 0.1979 | 0.3616 | 0.0497 | 1.198 |
| Income < \$800/month | -0.0236 | 0.2049 | 0.9084 | -0.0059 | 0.977 |
| Income \$800–1,999/month | 0.1389 | 0.1791 | 0.4378 | 0.0381 | 1.149 |
| Divorced | -0.4310 | 0.1626 | 0.0080 | -0.1108 | 0.650 |
| Represented by attorney | -0.3569 | 0.1501 | 0.0174 | -0.0983 | 0.700 |
| County population | 7.75E-8 | 1.28E-7 | 0.5443 | 0.1440 | 1.000 |
| Number of annual mediations | -5.00E-5 | 6.30E-5 | 0.4022 | -0.1846 | 1.000 |
| Family and Children Services budget | 1.18E-8 | 3.85E-8 | 0.7591 | 0.0470 | 1.000 |
| Recommending court | -0.0396 | 0.2137 | 0.8530 | -0.0105 | 0.961 |
| Modified orders sought | -0.3905 | 0.1524 | 0.0104 | -0.1025 | 0.677 |
| Case involves interparental violence | -0.2428 | 0.1913 | 0.2045 | -0.0569 | 0.784 |
| Case involves substance abuse | 0.3124 | 0.1891 | 0.0985 | 0.0732 | 1.367 |
| Case involves infant/toddler | 0.0798 | 0.1750 | 0.6484 | 0.0212 | 1.083 |
| Number of issues raised about children | -0.0217 | 0.0536 | 0.6859 | -0.0154 | 0.979 |
| Case issue difficulty rating | -0.0678 | 0.0332 | 0.0410 | -0.0937 | 0.934 |
| Number of issues raised about parents | -0.1472 | 0.0432 | 0.0006 | -0.1452 | 0.863 |

Total cases included in analysis: 2,322

R²: .0376

Predicted vs. observed values: 67.5% correct

Table B6. Logistic Regression Results: I would recommend mediation to friends if they had a custody or visitation problem

| Parameter | B | SE | p-value | B* | exp(B) |
|--|----------|---------|---------|---------|--------|
| (intercept) | 3.3998 | 0.6212 | < .0001 | ----- | 29.957 |
| Mother | 0.1297 | 0.1543 | 0.4004 | 0.0357 | 1.139 |
| Age | -0.0073 | 0.0111 | 0.5134 | -0.0315 | 0.993 |
| Hispanic | 0.1671 | 0.1865 | 0.3702 | 0.0409 | 1.182 |
| Black | -0.0732 | 0.2763 | 0.7912 | -0.0108 | 0.929 |
| Other race/ethnicity | 0.3450 | 0.2593 | 0.1834 | 0.0587 | 1.412 |
| Less than high school diploma | 0.4755 | 0.3180 | 0.1348 | 0.0851 | 1.609 |
| High school diploma | 0.3718 | 0.2499 | 0.1368 | 0.0891 | 1.450 |
| Some college | 0.1039 | 0.2037 | 0.6099 | 0.0286 | 1.110 |
| Income < \$800/month | -0.2192 | 0.2057 | 0.2866 | -0.0545 | 0.803 |
| Income \$800–1,999/month | 0.1382 | 0.1849 | 0.4551 | 0.0378 | 1.148 |
| Divorced | -0.2709 | 0.1661 | 0.1030 | -0.0696 | 0.763 |
| Represented by attorney | -0.1533 | 0.1522 | 0.3136 | -0.0422 | 0.858 |
| County population | 1.80E-7 | 1.26E-7 | 0.1540 | 0.3361 | 1.000 |
| Number of annual mediations | -9.00E-5 | 6.20E-5 | 0.1331 | -0.3270 | 1.000 |
| Family and Children Services budget | 3.09E-10 | 3.95E-8 | 0.9938 | 0.0012 | 1.000 |
| Recommending court | -0.2791 | 0.2230 | 0.2109 | -0.0741 | 0.756 |
| Modified orders sought | -0.1878 | 0.1560 | 0.2287 | -0.0494 | 0.829 |
| Case involves interparental violence | -0.5260 | 0.2061 | 0.0107 | -0.1230 | 0.591 |
| Case involves substance abuse | 0.0542 | 0.1882 | 0.7732 | 0.0127 | 1.056 |
| Case involves infant/toddler | 0.1037 | 0.1780 | 0.5601 | 0.0276 | 1.109 |
| Number of issues raised about children | 0.0272 | 0.0565 | 0.6307 | 0.0194 | 1.028 |
| Case issue difficulty rating | -0.0355 | 0.0330 | 0.2819 | -0.0490 | 0.965 |
| Number of issues raised about parents | -0.0748 | 0.0453 | 0.0991 | -0.0735 | 0.928 |

Total cases included in analysis: 2,297

R²: .0259

Predicted vs. observed values: 65.1% correct

Table B7. Logistic Regression Results: The mediator had some good ideas for us to consider for the sake of our children

| Parameter | B | SE | p-value | B* | exp(B) |
|--|----------|---------|---------|---------|--------|
| (intercept) | 3.5040 | 0.6927 | < .0001 | ----- | 33.248 |
| Mother | 0.2498 | 0.1732 | 0.1491 | 0.0688 | 1.284 |
| Age | 0.0054 | 0.0125 | 0.6661 | 0.0234 | 1.005 |
| Hispanic | 0.1952 | 0.2096 | 0.3517 | 0.0481 | 1.216 |
| Black | -0.0264 | 0.3092 | 0.9320 | -0.0039 | 0.974 |
| Other race/ethnicity | 0.3450 | 0.2905 | 0.2350 | 0.0587 | 1.412 |
| Less than high school diploma | 0.3533 | 0.3227 | 0.2737 | 0.0642 | 1.424 |
| High school diploma | 0.8620 | 0.2823 | 0.0023 | 0.2068 | 2.368 |
| Some college | 0.3671 | 0.2137 | 0.0858 | 0.1011 | 1.444 |
| Income < \$800/month | -0.0810 | 0.2337 | 0.7290 | -0.0202 | 0.922 |
| Income \$800–1,999/month | 0.0506 | 0.2028 | 0.8028 | 0.0139 | 1.052 |
| Divorced | -0.3152 | 0.1861 | 0.0904 | -0.0808 | 0.730 |
| Represented by attorney | -0.4870 | 0.1724 | 0.0047 | -0.1342 | 0.614 |
| County population | -2.94E-7 | 1.53E-7 | 0.0549 | -0.5472 | 1.000 |
| Number of annual mediations | 6.40E-5 | 7.70E-5 | 0.4062 | 0.2254 | 1.000 |
| Family and Children Services budget | 4.30E-8 | 4.65E-8 | 0.3548 | 0.1714 | 1.000 |
| Recommending court | -0.7435 | 0.2779 | 0.0075 | -0.1971 | 0.475 |
| Modified orders sought | -0.0181 | 0.1768 | 0.9186 | -0.0047 | 0.982 |
| Case involves interparental violence | -0.1458 | 0.2096 | 0.4867 | -0.0342 | 0.864 |
| Case involves substance abuse | 0.0846 | 0.2095 | 0.6864 | 0.0198 | 1.088 |
| Case involves infant/toddler | 0.1077 | 0.1971 | 0.5847 | 0.0287 | 1.114 |
| Number of issues raised about children | -0.1072 | 0.0583 | 0.0659 | -0.0762 | 0.898 |
| Case issue difficulty rating | -0.0804 | 0.0378 | 0.0332 | -0.1111 | 0.923 |
| Number of issues raised about parents | -0.0908 | 0.0504 | 0.0717 | -0.0885 | 0.913 |

Total cases included in analysis: 2,318

R²: .0286

Predicted vs. observed values: 66.6% correct

Table B8. Logistic Regression Results: The mediator was aware of my most important concerns about our children's needs

| Parameter | B | SE | p-value | B* | exp(B) |
|--|----------|---------|---------|---------|--------|
| (intercept) | 3.8254 | 0.6001 | < .0001 | ----- | 45.853 |
| Mother | 0.0865 | 0.1486 | 0.5606 | 0.0238 | 1.090 |
| Age | -0.0121 | 0.0108 | 0.2606 | -0.0524 | 0.988 |
| Hispanic | -0.2774 | 0.1695 | 0.1017 | -0.0681 | 0.758 |
| Black | 0.0763 | 0.2861 | 0.7896 | 0.0113 | 1.079 |
| Other race/ethnicity | 0.2015 | 0.2503 | 0.4207 | 0.0341 | 1.223 |
| Less than high school diploma | 0.6514 | 0.2939 | 0.0267 | 0.1179 | 1.918 |
| High school diploma | 0.7143 | 0.2429 | 0.0033 | 0.1715 | 2.043 |
| Some college | 0.2701 | 0.1952 | 0.1663 | 0.0744 | 1.310 |
| Income < \$800/month | -0.4438 | 0.2073 | 0.0323 | -0.1107 | 0.642 |
| Income \$800–1,999/month | -0.3347 | 0.1828 | 0.0671 | -0.0916 | 0.716 |
| Divorced | -0.0539 | 0.1634 | 0.7414 | -0.0139 | 0.948 |
| Represented by attorney | -0.1379 | 0.1465 | 0.3466 | -0.0380 | 0.871 |
| County population | 9.72E-8 | 1.26E-7 | 0.4419 | 0.1807 | 1.000 |
| Number of annual mediations | 4.50E-5 | 6.20E-5 | 0.4650 | 0.1597 | 1.000 |
| Family and Children Services budget | -1.06E-7 | 3.53E-8 | 0.0026 | -0.4234 | 1.000 |
| Recommending court | -0.7191 | 0.2321 | 0.0019 | -0.1905 | 0.487 |
| Modified orders sought | -0.1808 | 0.1508 | 0.2306 | -0.0475 | 0.835 |
| Case involves interparental violence | 0.0364 | 0.1777 | 0.8379 | 0.0085 | 1.037 |
| Case involves substance abuse | -0.0516 | 0.1807 | 0.7751 | -0.0121 | 0.950 |
| Case involves infant/toddler | 0.0285 | 0.1689 | 0.8658 | 0.0076 | 1.029 |
| Number of issues raised about children | -0.0379 | 0.0525 | 0.4699 | -0.0270 | 0.963 |
| Case issue difficulty rating | -0.0411 | 0.0318 | 0.1972 | -0.0566 | 0.960 |
| Number of issues raised about parents | -0.0809 | 0.0441 | 0.0668 | -0.0800 | 0.922 |

Total cases included in analysis: 2,353

R²: .0260

Predicted vs. observed values: 63.9% correct

Table B9. Logistic Regression Results: The mediator helped to keep us focused on our children's interests

| Parameter | B | SE | p-value | B* | exp(B) |
|--|----------|---------|---------|---------|--------|
| (intercept) | 2.4899 | 0.6125 | < .0001 | ----- | 12.061 |
| Mother | 0.3465 | 0.1569 | 0.0272 | 0.0955 | 1.414 |
| Age | 0.0096 | 0.0114 | 0.3987 | 0.0416 | 1.010 |
| Hispanic | 0.0458 | 0.1856 | 0.8052 | 0.0113 | 1.047 |
| Black | -0.1124 | 0.2902 | 0.6985 | -0.0167 | 0.894 |
| Other race/ethnicity | 0.1172 | 0.2514 | 0.6410 | 0.0197 | 1.124 |
| Less than high school diploma | 0.4612 | 0.3053 | 0.1309 | 0.0839 | 1.586 |
| High school diploma | 0.4254 | 0.2486 | 0.0870 | 0.1021 | 1.530 |
| Some college | 0.3145 | 0.2075 | 0.1296 | 0.0866 | 1.370 |
| Income < \$800/month | -0.4033 | 0.2140 | 0.0595 | -0.1003 | 0.668 |
| Income \$800–1,999/month | -0.1238 | 0.1899 | 0.5146 | -0.0339 | 0.884 |
| Divorced | -0.4665 | 0.1697 | 0.0060 | -0.1200 | 0.627 |
| Represented by attorney | -0.3505 | 0.1541 | 0.0230 | -0.0965 | 0.704 |
| County population | -4.88E-8 | 1.35E-7 | 0.7177 | -0.0909 | 1.000 |
| Number of annual mediations | 1.90E-5 | 6.70E-5 | 0.7743 | 0.0673 | 1.000 |
| Family and Children Services budget | 4.18E-9 | 3.98E-8 | 0.9164 | 0.0167 | 1.000 |
| Recommending court | -0.1953 | 0.2204 | 0.3755 | -0.0518 | 0.823 |
| Modified orders sought | 0.0723 | 0.1619 | 0.6553 | 0.0190 | 1.075 |
| Case involves interparental violence | 0.0849 | 0.1854 | 0.6468 | 0.0199 | 1.089 |
| Case involves substance abuse | 0.0405 | 0.1873 | 0.8288 | 0.0095 | 1.041 |
| Case involves infant/toddler | 0.1464 | 0.1784 | 0.4118 | 0.0390 | 1.158 |
| Number of issues raised about children | -0.0506 | 0.0548 | 0.3560 | -0.0359 | 0.951 |
| Case issue difficulty rating | -0.0369 | 0.0332 | 0.2675 | -0.0509 | 0.964 |
| Number of issues raised about parents | -0.1688 | 0.0451 | 0.0002 | -0.1651 | 0.845 |

Total cases included in analysis: 2,319

R²: .0238

Predicted vs. observed values: 63.7% correct

Table B10. Logistic Regression Results: I felt safe here today

| Parameter | B | SE | p-value | B* | exp (B) |
|--|----------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| (intercept) | 4.0981 | 0.6868 | < .0001 | ----- | 60.223 |
| Mother | -0.3514 | 0.1684 | 0.0369 | -0.0968 | 0.704 |
| Age | 0.0007 | 0.0121 | 0.9565 | 0.0029 | 1.001 |
| Hispanic | -0.0673 | 0.1935 | 0.7281 | -0.0165 | 0.935 |
| Black | -0.4743 | 0.2897 | 0.1015 | -0.0700 | 0.622 |
| Other race/ethnicity | 0.3051 | 0.2898 | 0.2925 | 0.0516 | 1.357 |
| Less than high school diploma | 0.0745 | 0.3114 | 0.8109 | 0.0135 | 1.077 |
| High school diploma | 0.2674 | 0.2716 | 0.3250 | 0.0643 | 1.307 |
| Some college | 0.1937 | 0.2312 | 0.4022 | 0.0533 | 1.214 |
| Income < \$800/month | -0.4044 | 0.2348 | 0.0851 | -0.1007 | 0.667 |
| Income \$800–1,999/month | -0.2462 | 0.2129 | 0.2476 | -0.0674 | 0.782 |
| Divorced | -0.1906 | 0.1827 | 0.2967 | -0.0490 | 0.826 |
| Represented by attorney | -0.1686 | 0.1637 | 0.3032 | -0.0464 | 0.845 |
| County population | -2.07E-7 | 1.47E-7 | 0.1586 | -0.3854 | 1.000 |
| Number of annual mediations | 0.0001 | 7.30E-5 | 0.1381 | 0.3808 | 1.000 |
| Family and Children Services budget | -5.17E-9 | 4.30E-8 | 0.9044 | -0.0206 | 1.000 |
| Recommending court | -0.4912 | 0.2455 | 0.0454 | -0.1301 | 0.612 |
| Modified orders sought | -0.0626 | 0.1697 | 0.7120 | -0.0165 | 0.939 |
| Case involves interparental violence | -0.5099 | 0.2261 | 0.0241 | -0.1191 | 0.601 |
| Case involves substance abuse | -0.4649 | 0.1909 | 0.0149 | -0.1088 | 0.628 |
| Case involves infant/toddler | 0.1525 | 0.1879 | 0.4169 | 0.0406 | 1.165 |
| Number of issues raised about children | -0.0827 | 0.0561 | 0.1405 | -0.0589 | 0.921 |
| Case issue difficulty rating | -0.0504 | 0.0364 | 0.1664 | -0.0695 | 0.951 |
| Number of issues raised about parents | -0.0284 | 0.0491 | 0.5632 | -0.0280 | 0.972 |

Total cases included in analysis: 2,354

R²: .0243

Predicted vs. observed values: 65.7% correct

Table B11. Logistic Regression Results: The other parent had an unfair advantage in mediation

| Parameter | B | SE | p-value | B* | exp (B) |
|--|----------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| (intercept) | 3.0930 | 0.4734 | < .0001 | ----- | 22.043 |
| Mother | 0.6876 | 0.1210 | < .0001 | 0.1895 | 1.989 |
| Age | -0.0164 | 0.0085 | 0.0534 | -0.0710 | 0.984 |
| Hispanic | -0.2487 | 0.1383 | 0.0721 | -0.0609 | 0.780 |
| Black | -0.3079 | 0.2185 | 0.1588 | -0.0459 | 0.735 |
| Other race/ethnicity | -0.2466 | 0.1818 | 0.1749 | -0.0416 | 0.781 |
| Less than high school diploma | -0.3752 | 0.2318 | 0.1055 | -0.0675 | 0.687 |
| High school diploma | -0.0967 | 0.2023 | 0.6325 | -0.0232 | 0.908 |
| Some college | -0.1094 | 0.1761 | 0.5345 | -0.0301 | 0.896 |
| Income < \$800/month | -0.4055 | 0.1657 | 0.0144 | -0.1010 | 0.667 |
| Income \$800–1,999/month | -0.0723 | 0.1456 | 0.6195 | -0.0198 | 0.930 |
| Divorced | -0.2679 | 0.1329 | 0.0438 | -0.0688 | 0.765 |
| Represented by attorney | -0.1645 | 0.1180 | 0.1633 | -0.0453 | 0.848 |
| County population | 1.01E-7 | 1.01E-7 | 0.3150 | 0.1883 | 1.000 |
| Number of annual mediations | -2.00E-5 | 4.90E-5 | 0.6240 | -0.0851 | 1.000 |
| Family and Children Services budget | -6.22E-9 | 3.04E-8 | 0.8378 | -0.0248 | 1.000 |
| Recommending court | -0.0989 | 0.1632 | 0.5446 | -0.0262 | 0.906 |
| Modified orders sought | 0.0567 | 0.1249 | 0.6497 | 0.0149 | 1.058 |
| Case involves interparental violence | -0.2279 | 0.1457 | 0.1179 | -0.0534 | 0.796 |
| Case involves substance abuse | 0.0458 | 0.1476 | 0.7561 | 0.0107 | 1.047 |
| Case involves infant/toddler | -0.1902 | 0.1327 | 0.1517 | -0.0506 | 0.827 |
| Number of issues raised about children | 0.0156 | 0.0448 | 0.7272 | 0.0111 | 1.016 |
| Case issue difficulty rating | -0.0746 | 0.0252 | 0.0031 | -0.1034 | 0.928 |
| Number of issues raised about parents | -0.0494 | 0.0372 | 0.1844 | -0.0485 | 0.952 |

Total cases included in analysis: 2,305

R²: .0397

Predicted vs. observed values: 64.4% correct

Table B12. Logistic Regression Results: My role as a parent was taken seriously in mediation

| Parameter | B | SE | p-value | B* | exp(B) |
|--|----------|---------|---------|---------|--------|
| (intercept) | 3.2625 | 0.6236 | < .0001 | ----- | 26.115 |
| Mother | 0.2962 | 0.1537 | 0.0539 | 0.0816 | 1.345 |
| Age | 0.0110 | 0.0113 | 0.3302 | 0.0476 | 1.011 |
| Hispanic | -0.0893 | 0.1788 | 0.6175 | -0.0219 | 0.915 |
| Black | 0.1600 | 0.3090 | 0.6045 | 0.0237 | 1.174 |
| Other race/ethnicity | -0.1619 | 0.2299 | 0.4812 | -0.0272 | 0.851 |
| Less than high school diploma | 0.5564 | 0.3096 | 0.0723 | 0.0999 | 1.744 |
| High school diploma | 0.3510 | 0.2466 | 0.1547 | 0.0842 | 1.421 |
| Some college | 0.2226 | 0.2087 | 0.2861 | 0.0613 | 1.249 |
| Income < \$800/month | -0.3381 | 0.2095 | 0.1066 | -0.0842 | 0.713 |
| Income \$800–1,999/month | -0.0729 | 0.1883 | 0.6986 | -0.0200 | 0.930 |
| Divorced | -0.1378 | 0.1699 | 0.4173 | -0.0354 | 0.871 |
| Represented by attorney | -0.2320 | 0.1510 | 0.1243 | -0.0639 | 0.793 |
| County population | 4.23E-8 | 1.31E-7 | 0.7458 | 0.0784 | 1.000 |
| Number of annual mediations | 4.10E-5 | 6.40E-5 | 0.5258 | 0.1419 | 1.000 |
| Family and Children Services budget | -5.80E-8 | 3.77E-8 | 0.1234 | -0.2308 | 1.000 |
| Recommending court | -0.5919 | 0.2296 | 0.0099 | -0.1567 | 0.553 |
| Modified orders sought | -0.2196 | 0.1554 | 0.1577 | -0.0577 | 0.803 |
| Case involves interparental violence | -0.2217 | 0.1949 | 0.2555 | -0.0518 | 0.801 |
| Case involves substance abuse | -0.0079 | 0.1845 | 0.9661 | -0.0018 | 0.992 |
| Case involves infant/toddler | -0.1147 | 0.1708 | 0.5019 | -0.0305 | 0.892 |
| Number of issues raised about children | -0.0590 | 0.0535 | 0.2707 | -0.0419 | 0.943 |
| Case issue difficulty rating | -0.0739 | 0.0334 | 0.0271 | -0.1023 | 0.929 |
| Number of issues raised about parents | -0.0869 | 0.0448 | 0.0526 | -0.0858 | 0.917 |

Total cases included in analysis: 2,340

R²: .0245

Predicted vs. observed values: 65.1% correct

Table B13. Logistic Regression Results: The mediator treated me with respect

| Parameter | B | SE | p-value | B* | exp(B) |
|--|-----------|---------|---------|---------|--------|
| (intercept) | 3.9753 | 1.0233 | 0.0001 | ----- | 53.265 |
| Mother | 0.3257 | 0.2538 | 0.1994 | 0.0897 | 1.385 |
| Age | 0.0182 | 0.0185 | 0.3268 | 0.0788 | 1.018 |
| Hispanic | 0.0444 | 0.2910 | 0.8788 | 0.0109 | 1.045 |
| Black | 0.3750 | 0.5041 | 0.4569 | 0.0554 | 1.455 |
| Other race/ethnicity | 0.1197 | 0.3984 | 0.7638 | 0.0202 | 1.127 |
| Less than high school diploma | 0.0212 | 0.4762 | 0.9645 | 0.0038 | 1.021 |
| High school diploma | 0.4400 | 0.4415 | 0.3190 | 0.1054 | 1.553 |
| Some college | -0.0847 | 0.3502 | 0.8088 | -0.0233 | 0.919 |
| Income < \$800/month | -0.4017 | 0.3239 | 0.2149 | -0.1002 | 0.669 |
| Income \$800–1,999/month | 0.4147 | 0.3191 | 0.1938 | 0.1135 | 1.514 |
| Divorced | -0.2694 | 0.2750 | 0.3273 | -0.0693 | 0.764 |
| Represented by attorney | -0.1675 | 0.2481 | 0.4996 | -0.0461 | 0.846 |
| County population | -9.46E-13 | 2.12E-7 | 0.9964 | -0.0018 | 1.000 |
| Number of annual mediations | -4.00E-5 | .0001 | 0.7075 | -0.1395 | 1.000 |
| Family and Children Services budget | -7.82E-9 | 6.64E-8 | 0.9063 | -0.0312 | 1.000 |
| Recommending court | -0.4494 | 0.3983 | 0.2592 | -0.1191 | 0.638 |
| Modified orders sought | 0.4308 | 0.2694 | 0.1097 | 0.1132 | 1.539 |
| Case involves interparental violence | -0.6264 | 0.3559 | 0.0784 | -0.1464 | 0.534 |
| Case involves substance abuse | -0.1424 | 0.2942 | 0.6283 | -0.0334 | 0.867 |
| Case involves infant/toddler | 0.3281 | 0.2886 | 0.2556 | 0.0872 | 1.388 |
| Number of issues raised about children | -0.1513 | 0.0828 | 0.0677 | -0.1078 | 0.860 |
| Case issue difficulty rating | -0.0239 | 0.0539 | 0.6574 | -0.0330 | 0.976 |
| Number of issues raised about parents | -0.0656 | 0.0735 | 0.3724 | -0.0644 | 0.937 |

Total cases included in analysis: 2,347

R²: .0138

Predicted vs. observed values: 66.0% correct

**Judicial Council of California
Administrative Office of the Courts**

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