

**IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF THE STATE OF ARIZONA
IN AND FOR THE COUNTY OF MARICOPA**

IN THE MATTER OF CASE MANAGEMENT
PROCEDURES IN FAMILY COURT AND
THE EARLY RESOLUTION CONFERENCE
PROGRAM

ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER
NO. 2021-016

Whereas, Administrative Order 2010-118 established the existing Early Resolution Conference program and that Administrative Order is expiring; and

Whereas, operation of the program continues to meet objectives set forth by applicable rules; and

Whereas, Rules 16(a), Arizona Rules of Civil Procedure, encourages early case management, expedited just resolution of cases, conservation of resources of the parties, and improvement of the quality of case resolution through thorough and timely preparation; and

Whereas, Rule 66 (a), Arizona Rules of Family Law Procedure, encourages early case management and resolution of family law cases using non-adversarial means of Alternative Dispute Resolution (“ADR”), and

Whereas, Rule 66 (c), Arizona Rules of Family Law Procedure, authorizes the Court to schedule processes that provide parties with the opportunity to resolve their dispute without court litigation; and

Whereas Rule 66(e), Arizona Rules of Family Law Procedure, imposes a duty upon parties to engage in good faith discussions about settlement; and

Whereas, Rule 73(a), Arizona Rules of Family Law Procedure, authorizes the appointment of conference officers to conduct conferences and facilitate settlement; and

Whereas, Rule 6.3(a), Local Rules of Practice of the Superior Court— Maricopa County, authorizes early case management and ADR processes and Rule 6.3(c) allows the court to mandate participation by the parties; and

Whereas, the Family Court has a high percentage of cases involving self-represented litigants that have difficulty with complex court rules and procedures; and

delay of prompt resolution of these cases results in further conflict, instability and harm to children and family relationships; and

Whereas, continued use of a comprehensive and uniform case management system is necessary with respect to these cases to effectively and timely adjudicate the issues and prevent delay and confusion to the parties;

IT IS ORDERED:

1. Court Administration is authorized to continue an early intervention program to provide assistance to all Family Court cases involving two self-represented litigants to settle and resolve disputed issues, to assist the parties in memorializing agreements for presentation to the Court, to assist the Court in case management, and to work with the assigned divisions to schedule future hearing dates and other events to finalize cases.
2. This early intervention program shall be directed by the Family Court Administrator and Family Court Presiding Judge, with conferences conducted by qualified law-trained professionals trained to mediate and facilitate agreements in family law cases and include any necessary staff to assist in the resolution and management of cases in a timely and judicious manner.
3. This program shall continue to be known as the “Early Resolution Conference Program” and shall be conducted in accordance with family law statutes, court rules, and department policy adopted herewith, and to be amended from time to time as authorized by the Family Court Presiding Judge.
4. Administrative Order No. 2010-118 (*In The Matter of Case Management Procedures in Family Court For Self Represented Litigants By Attorney Case Managers and Authorizing Early Resolution Triage Program*) is vacated.

Dated this day 29th of March, 2021.

/s/ Bruce R. Cohen
Hon. Bruce R. Cohen
Presiding Family Court Judge

Original: Clerk of the Superior Court

Copies: Hon. Joseph Welty, Presiding Judge
Hon. Joseph Kreamer, Associate Presiding Judge
All Family Court Judges and Commissioners
Raymond Billotte, Judicial Branch Administrator
Shawn Friend, Deputy Court Administrator
Brian Bledsoe, Family Court Administrator