Top Ten Reasons to Use Parenting Plan Mediation in Divorce

By Tara Fass, LMFT and Diana Mercer, Attorney-Mediator

1. The best predictor of the well being of children involved in a divorce is the amount of conflict between parents. In mediation, conflicts are more likely to be resolved, resulting in a more peaceful post-divorce family life.
2. Mediation helps parents create truly thoughtful and child-focused parenting plans that are tailor-made to suit their children’s changing emotional, developmental and temperamental needs as well as the family’s schedule.
3. By thinking through and discussing the parenting plan, possible problems can be identified and resolved before the final judgment is entered by the court.
4. Mediation creates opportunities for parents to work together and build on their strengths as they redefine the parental unit within the family. Parents who can model good conflict resolution skills for their children raise children with better conflict resolution skills.
5. A detailed parenting plan sends a message between the parents and others, including the children, new partners, school and court personnel that parenting is an important priority for both parents, even if one parent assumes more hands-on time with the children.
6. A detailed and thorough parenting plan pre-empts back and forth, ‘He Said/She Said,’ arguments if differing views of the co-parenting history emerge.
7. Agreements, including modifications, create a record, or ‘paper trail,’ of what was mutually agreed to when one or both parties were thinking more clearly about the issues involved in successful and co-operative co-parenting.
8. A detailed parenting plan sets forth a method to resolve differences without going to court in case you need to modify the parenting plan when things change, or if new partners, or reluctant children, want to unilaterally change the plan.
9. When co-parents deviate from the parenting plan and then fall into disagreement, a detailed parenting plan provides a useful backup plan until they return to mediation.
10. Mediation provides both parents with the opportunity to explore co-parenting issues with an objective third-party neutral who is a professional trained in children’s developmental needs and is knowledgeable about the research on children’s adjustment to separation and divorce.