

This document is aimed at helping you prepare your opening statement for mediation.

Your opening statement is a key part of the mediation process. It's your opportunity to put forward your concerns and issues leading to this mediation, the topics you would like to discuss in the mediation and what you hope to get out of the process. The other party and the mediator will be listening carefully and without interruption - so you are encouraged to express yourself honestly and calmly. This is a significant step in the mediation process, and we ask that you put effort and thought into your opening statement.

Your opening statement reflects your point of view. While it's tempting to say everything, you consider to be your side of the story, the point of the opening statement is to try and put forward key points or topics you would like to discuss and resolve during the mediation. It's a good idea to write your opening statement down in brief dot point format - you can read the bullet points or simply refer to them when you are delivering your opening statement. Below are some tips to help you on your way.

### Tips for writing your opening statement

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- Briefly outline what you would like to talk about in the mediation
- Briefly describe what you would like to happen in mediation - describe the outcome you are seeking
- Briefly describe why you are seeking this outcome
- Briefly list your concerns about reaching this outcome
- Be respectful - try not to use negative or upsetting language - for example, don't accuse the other party of being something (i.e. selfish, careless etc) or behaving in a certain way
- Try not to exaggerate the point you are making - just be concise and describe it as best you can
- Practice delivering your opening statement or going through the dot points. You can make notes under each 'topic' bullet point to help you remember any additional important detail. You may refer to this throughout the mediation.
- Speak calmly and slowly - the mediator and the other party will be focused on listening to what you have to say. There will be a lot to take in - don't race through it.
- If any point you make requires further documentation (i.e., medical records / school letters) ensure the mediator has access to documentation prior to mediation day