

## Case Evaluation Hearings in Family Matters

Case Evaluation Hearings are intended primarily for pending matters that have not had previous court dates. The purpose of a Case Evaluation Hearing is to determine the specific issues in the case, the likelihood of the parties reaching an agreement, the amount of court involvement needed, and the scheduling of further proceedings. If the court determines it is necessary, Family Relations Counselors will be available at the hearing to meet separately with parties and counsel to assist the court in the development of an Action Plan, including further scheduling in the case. If a final agreement is not reached, the court will enter orders about the future steps in the case. **This is not a date when the court will hear any contested matters.**

Case Evaluation Hearings will be used on a transitional basis to incorporate pending cases into the new family court process. Because they are not contested hearings, the Standing Management Order for Trials, Hearings, Case Dates and Resolution Plan Dates does not apply to Case Evaluation Hearings. Counsel and parties assigned a Case Evaluation Date are not required to exchange with each other, nor submit to the court, any documents, except financial affidavits if the case involves financial issues.

The Case Evaluation Hearing is a mandatory hearing, unless before the hearing date the parties submit to the court a final agreement on all issues in the case.