Other

The **4th Option** or "**Other**" is one of the prescribed methods for Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) in the Child & Family Services Act of Ontario. The 4th Option is a unique method of ADR to be utilized in circumstances where one of the other prescribed methods (FGC, CPM or ODR) is not available or where another method is deemed more suitable. This is a decision-making process for resolving disputes between a children's aid society (CAS) and the family of a child who is (or may be) in need of protection. Funding from the Ministry of Children & Youth Services supports the use of ADR if a court intervention is being considered, is pending, or is in progress. There are specific criteria for 4th Option or "Other" referrals.

Criteria for 4th Option or "Other" referrals

- Be described in a detailed written proposal
- Satisfy the criteria of a prescribed method of ADR, as outlined in the regulation
- Be facilitated by a person who meets the criteria outlined in the qualifications & experience section of this directive;
- Be assessed & approved by the Executive Director of the children's aid society involved
- Executive Directors may only approve other methods of ADR, where the facilitators have the following: a post-secondary degree or diploma in social service or children's services or equivalent; experience in the social service or children's services; knowledge of the Child and Family Services Act; a satisfactory criminal record check completed within the last three years; and three satisfactory professional references.

Examples of the 4th Option being customized to meet the needs of a particular family

- A medically fragile child was successfully returned to her community and the care of her grandparents. This required the support of the family group as well as team of knowledgeable medical practitioners & service providers. The ADR used was a Family Team approach coupled with a Family Group Conference.
- A parent with cognitive challenges, the ADR Practitioner broke the Family Group Conference meeting into four separate sessions, each lasting 1-1.5 hours and focusing on one bottom line/ aspect of the plan at a time. This successfully resulted in the return of two children to their mother's and great-grandmother's care.

How is the 4th Option being used in the South West region?

- Recommended to be used when the other three options are deemed not suitable.
- Only used with careful thought, consideration and consultation and with an experienced ADR Practitioner who has been approved by ADR-Link to provide the consultation.
- Must meet the Ministry guideline criteria.
- The referral agent can contact ADR-Link to arrange for a consultation to assess if the case qualifies for this method of ADR.

ADR-LINK

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