



Centred Counselling & Mediation

WHY DO WE NEED TO DO A VOICE OF THE CHILD ASSESSMENT IN DIVORCE MEDIATION WHEN CHILDREN ARE INVOLVED?

Byron Werbeloff | Accredited Family, Divorce & Post-Divorce Mediator

 www.centredcounselling.co.za |  084 485 3541

 byron@centredcounselling.co.za

When children are affected by separation or divorce, their well-being must be prioritised. A

Voice of the Child Assessment is based on the fundamental principle of **ensuring that children have a say in matters that affect them..*** These assessments provide an opportunity for children to express their views, preferences, and feelings regarding post-separation arrangements.

By incorporating the child's voice into the mediation process, it ensures that the agreements reached reflect the child's needs and perspectives, leading to outcomes that are in the **best interests** of the child.

WHAT IS A VOICE OF THE CHILD ASSESSMENT?

A **Voice of the Child Assessment** is a specialised process designed to listen to and understand the wishes and feelings of children who are dealing with the separation or divorce of their parents. A trained, neutral professional, such as a child-inclusive family mediator, conducts a series of age-appropriate, confidential interviews to gauge the child's perspectives on parenting arrangements, living situations and their overall well-being.

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

- **Prioritising the child's well-being:** The child is at the centre of the mediation process, ensuring that their best interests are prioritised.
- **Guiding effective co-parenting:** Understanding the child's views helps parents **develop realistic and workable co-parenting plans** that meet the child's needs.
- **Minimising stress for the child:** By giving children a safe space to share their thoughts and feelings, they may feel **less anxious and more secure** about discussing their future arrangements.