
New King's Bench Family Focused Protocol (FFP)

Family Town Hall
September 22, 2025



Program Overview

- Overview of the Family Focused Protocol (FFP)
- Family Flow Chart: Swim Lanes and Process Overview
- Pre-Court Services and Commencement of Action
- Case Management Officer (CMO) Process
- MIT Assignment
- Subsequent Case Conferences
- Settlement Conferences
- Litigation Plans, 4.10 Case Conferences
- Desk Duty Justice and Desk Processes
- Resolution Counsel





Purpose and Goals of the FFP

Introduction to FFP

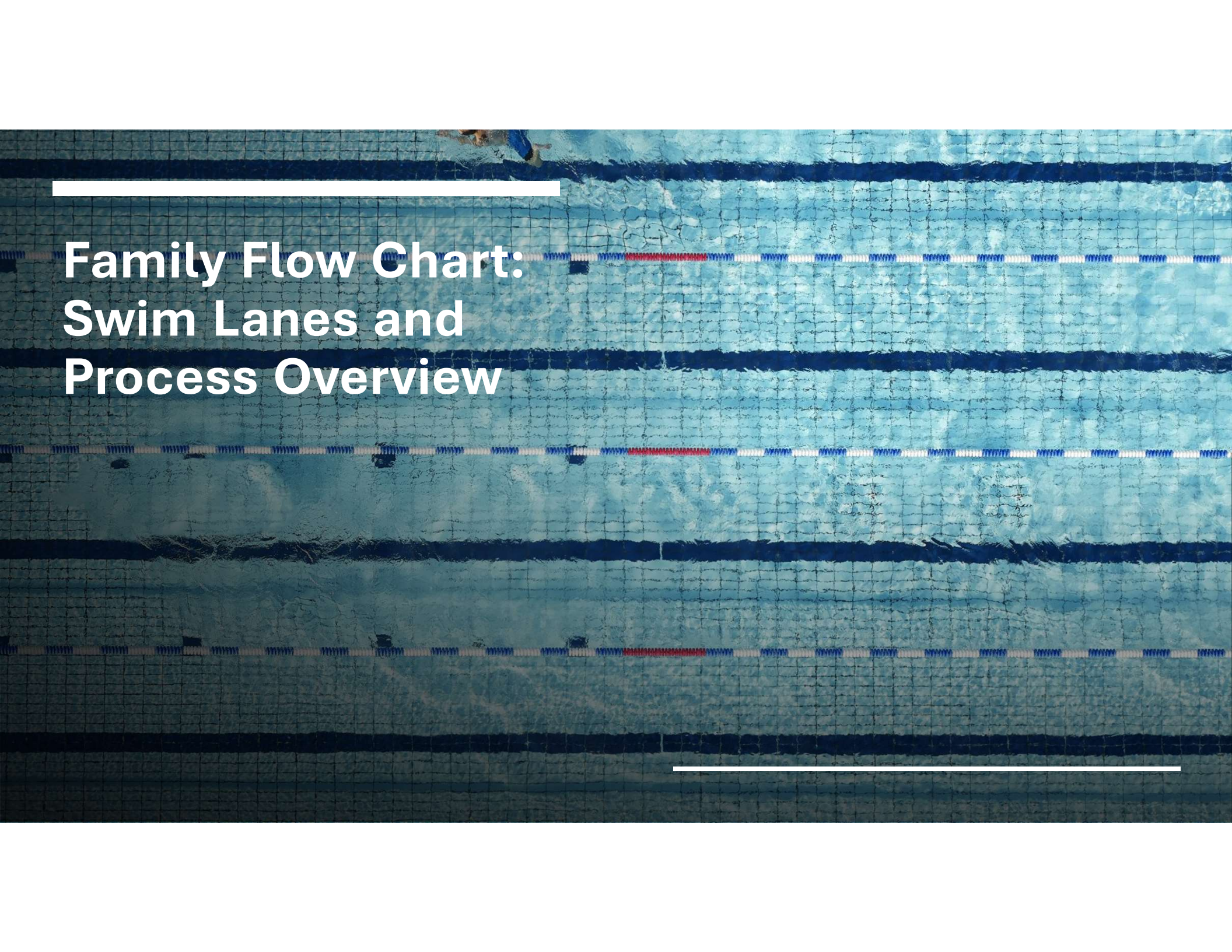
The Family Focused Protocol introduces a new approach emphasizing family-centered and resolution-oriented processes.

Need for Change

High conflict family litigation causes long-term harm, especially to children, which calls for streamlined processes.

Implementation Timeline

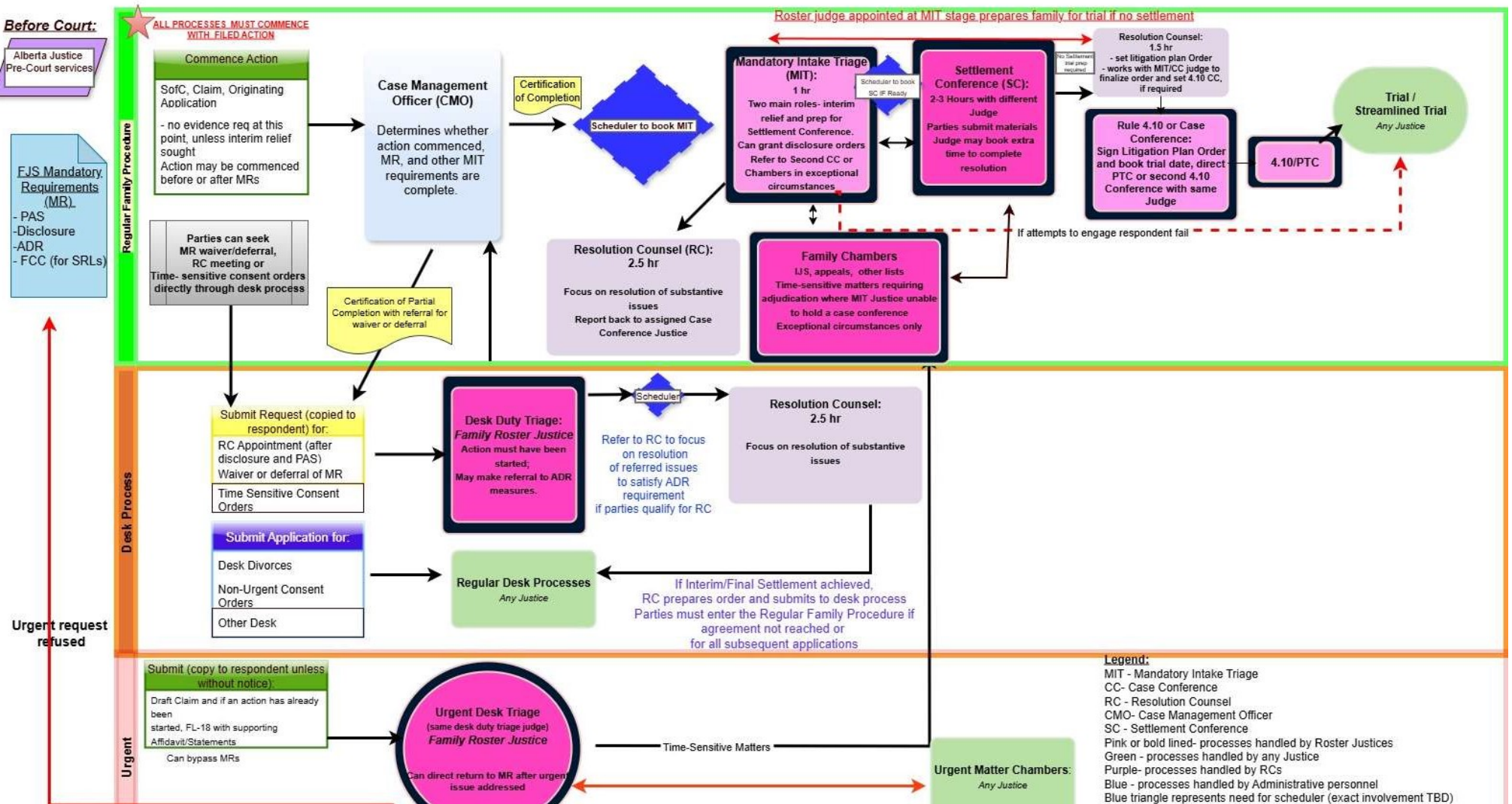
The new family process begins in January 2026 with a roster of dedicated justices focusing on expeditious and comprehensive resolutions.

An aerial photograph of a swimming pool with several lanes marked by blue and red lane lines. A swimmer is visible in the upper left lane. The text "Family Flow Chart: Swim Lanes and Process Overview" is overlaid on the left side of the image.

Family Flow Chart: Swim Lanes and Process Overview

Case Conferencing and Adjudication System for Family Matters (Chart A)

DRAFT FOR DISCUSSION PURPOSES - April 22, 2025



Explanation of Flow Chart and Swim Lanes



Swim Lane 1 Overview

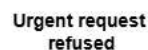
The top green swim lane covers file processing from screening to trial.

Swim Lane 2 Overview

The middle orange swim lane represents desk duty triage justice processes, such as requests for waivers and deferrals.

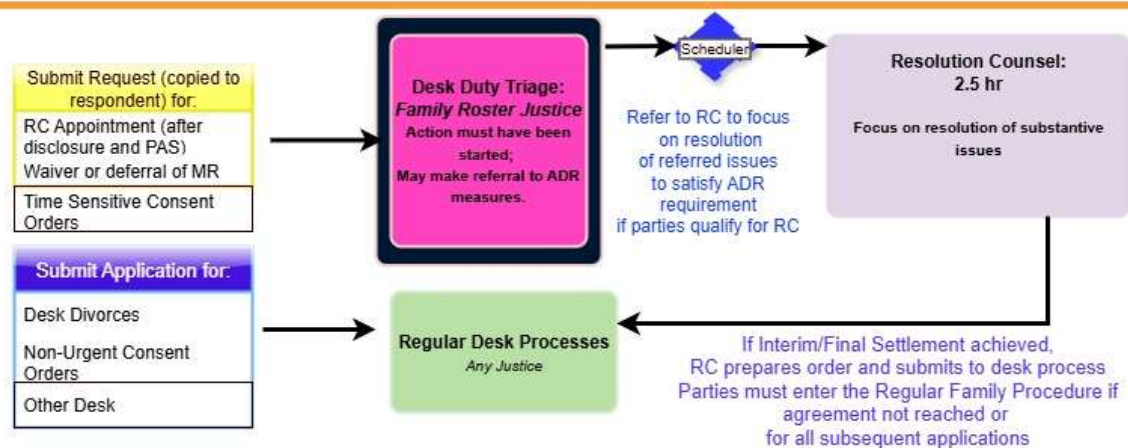
Swim Lane 3 Overview

The bottom red swim lane indicates the urgent file process for those files requiring immediate attention.

SWIM LANE 1 - September 18, 2026

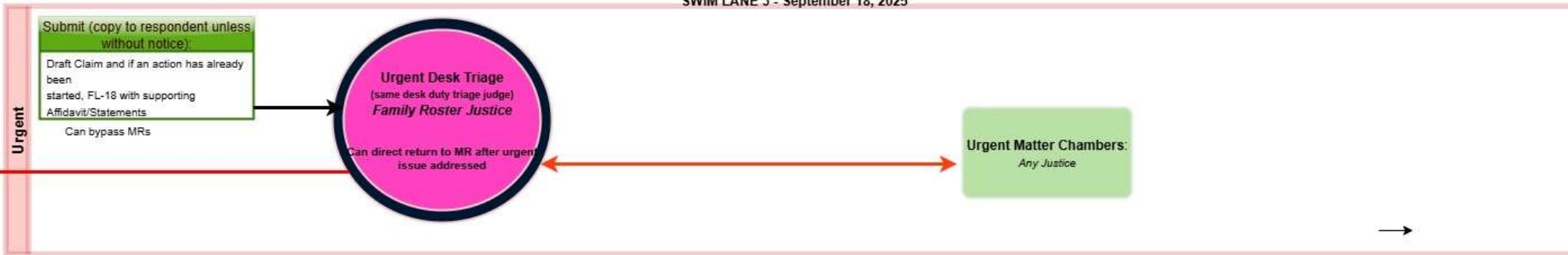
Case Conferencing and Adjudication System for Family Matters (Chart A)

SWIM LANE 2 - September 18, 2025



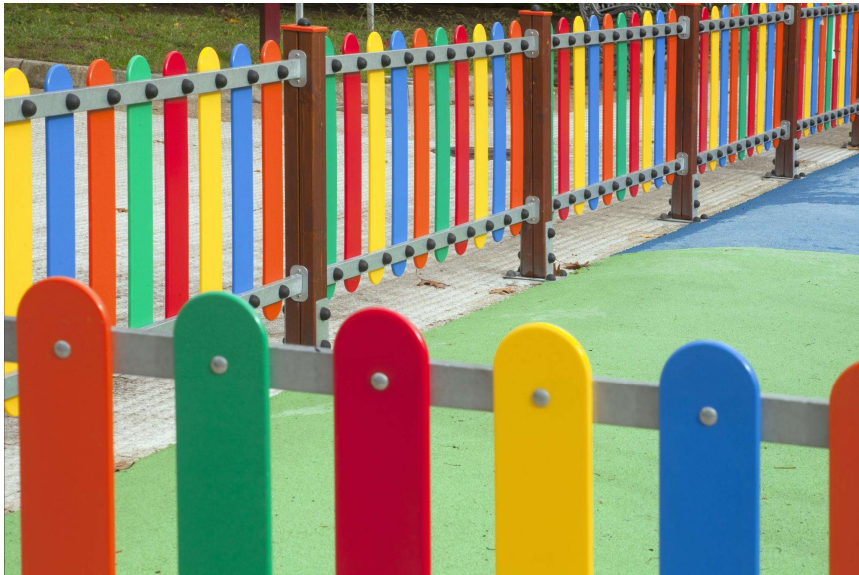
Case Conferencing and Adjudication System for Family Matters (Chart A)

SWIM LANE 3 - September 18, 2025



Urgent request
refused

Included and Excluded Processes in the FFP



Included: Regular Family Processes

Regular family law matters proceed under the new family process swim lane 1, streamlining the process from resolution through to trial, if resolution is unsuccessful.

Excluded: Protection Orders

Applications for protection orders are excluded from the main family process and handled separately.

Excluded: Urgent Applications Handling

Approved urgent applications proceed through the desk process to urgent matters chambers or family chambers.

Excluded: Specialized Proceedings and Lists

Certain proceedings like surrogacy orders, appeals, international child abduction, and interjurisdictional support are excluded from the FFP processes.

Pre-Court Services and Commencement of Action

FJS Mandatory
Requirements
(MR)

- PAS
- Disclosure
- ADR
- FCC (for SRLs)

Pre-Court Services and Mandatory Requirements (MRs)

PAS

Any party seeking parenting time must complete the online course and obtain a Parenting After Separation (PAS) certificate within the **last 2 years**

ADR

Any party seeking any type of family law relief must have participated in an Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) process on matters in issue **within the last 6 months**

Disclosure

Any party seeking relief must have served the other party with their financial disclosure, including Cunningham/Sweezy disclosure, where appropriate

Meeting with Family Court Counselor

If a party seeking relief is self-represented, they must have met with an FCC.

Family Justice Strategy Overview

The Family Justice Strategy governs pre-court services and is gradually expanding to be a province wide service.

Role of Family Court Counsellors

Family Court Counsellors help self-represented parties prepare and organize court materials effectively. They also facilitate referrals to other services.

Mandatory Requirements for Court Access

Mandatory Requirements must be completed before parties can access Court/Judicial services, with exceptions for urgent matters or where a waiver/deferral has been obtained.

Commencement of Action and Initial Steps

Commence Action

SofC, Claim, Originating Application

- no evidence req at this point, unless interim relief sought

Action may be commenced before or after MRs

Action Commencement Requirement

An action must be commenced and the originating documents served before seeking any relief.

Response Time Allocation

Appropriate timelines under the Rules for a response must lapse before a matter can proceed within the FFP framework.

Filing Without Seeking Relief

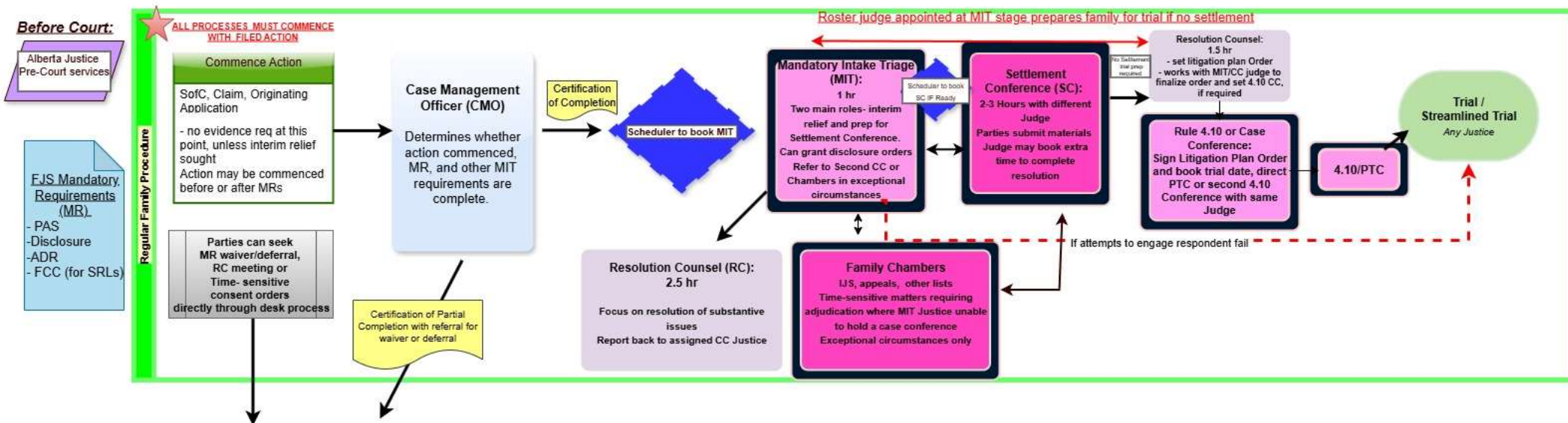
There is no requirement to proceed into the FFP if the parties wish to exchange disclosure and pursue other alternatives for resolution. Only once they wish to access court services is it necessary to move into FFP swim lane 1.

Request for Mandatory Intake Conference

To seek relief, parties must complete MR's and file a Request for a MIT Conference and MIT Summary to book an initial meeting with a Justice. If there is a need for interim relief the application documents must also be filed.

Case Conferencing and Adjudication System for Family Matters

SWIM LANE 1 - September 18, 2026



Case Management Officer (CMO) Process

Case Management Officer (CMO)

Determines whether
action commenced,
MR, and other MIT
requirements are
complete.

Role and Review Process of CMO



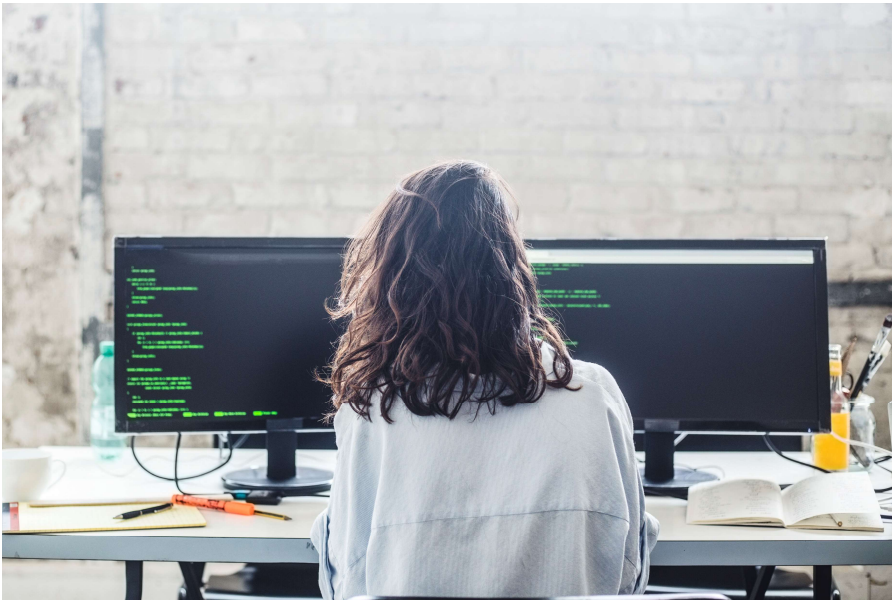
CMO Role and Responsibility

CMOs act as gatekeepers ensuring compliance with mandatory requirements before a matter proceeds to a MIT Justice.

Online Dashboard Platform

Justice Digital's platform displays case files and documents for CMOs to efficiently vet before approval for MIT meetings.

CMO Dashboard and Timing of Materials



MIT Package Filing and Service

Applicant seeking a meeting with a MIT Justice files a MIT package with proof of compliance and serves respondent with filed copies.

Affidavit of Service and Dashboard Appearance

Affidavit of Service of the MIT package filed; MIT package appears on CMO dashboard for review 14 days after date of service.

CMO Review and Actions

CMO reviews MIT package and chooses to accept, reject, or snooze.



Outcome of CMO Review and Scheduling

Certification of Completion

CMO certifies completion of the MRs and advises the parties when all requirements are met, enabling progress to scheduling.

Scheduling Process

The Applicant or Cross-Applicant must make a request for an MIT meeting within 30 days of being certified to proceed. Schedulers will coordinate with the parties and assigned MIT Justice to find a mutually-available date for the initial one-hour meeting

Rejection and Snooze

If deficiencies exist, the CMO will reject. If there is only a minor deficiency, they will snooze the file to allow corrections without refiling the entire package. If rejected, the submitting party will need to resubmit and serve a new package.

MIT Assignment

MIT Meeting Purpose

The MIT meeting is a one-hour session with a Justice
Same justice will guide the case through resolution and up to trial.

Actions During MIT

Justice may mediate, grant interim relief, set procedural orders, or refer matter directly to litigation plan/trial. MIT Justice also considers the needs for things such as appraisals, valuations, and other professional assistance to ensure parties are ready for the settlement conference.

Special Needs Consideration for Settlement Conference

MIT Justice assesses accommodations, including security, cultural needs, domestic violence considerations, and requirements to obtain the child's voice.

Mandatory Intake Triage (MIT):

1 hr

Two main roles- interim relief and prep for Settlement Conference.

Can grant disclosure orders

Refer to Second CC or Chambers in exceptional circumstances

Subsequent Case Conferences



Requesting further interim relief including interim variation

A request for a variation after the initial MIT meeting must be made in writing to the assigned Case Conference Justice (the one who conducted the MIT Conference). The goal is to deal with necessary interim relief in the first meeting. Multiply interim applications are highly discouraged.

Scheduling Case Conferences

If the CC Justice directs leave pre-trial for a variation application in exceptional circumstances, a second case conference can be scheduled in one- or two-hour slots before the Case Conference Justice.

If the matter is urgent, it may be sent to chambers. If more time or a hearing is required, approval of the Chief of ACJ must be sought by the parties.

Handling Non-Urgent Requests

Where possible some requests of the Case Conference Justice will be addressed in writing without the need for a further case conference.

Settlement Conference



**Settlement
Conference (SC):**
**2-3 Hours with different
Judge**
Parties submit materials
**Judge may book extra
time to complete
resolution**

Settlement Conferences and Judicial Interview of Children



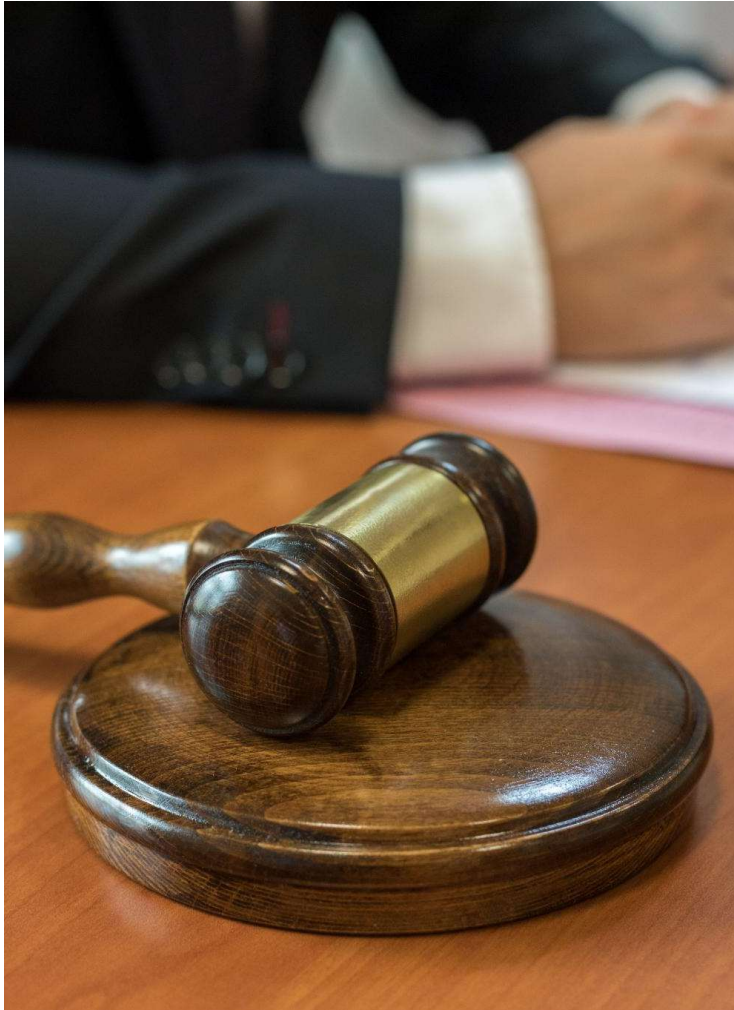
Scheduling and Role Assignment

Settlement Conferences are scheduled after compliance with any procedural orders and may be binding (if justice agrees) or non-binding (initially only binding settlement conferences will occur in Grande Prairie). If a binding settlement conference is intended all parties must sign a binding settlement conference agreement.

Child's Voice

In addition to the usual methods of getting the child's voice before the Court, the Court is working on a guideline for Judicial interviews with children.

*some justices may be agreeable at this time but it is entirely within their discretion



Litigation Plans, 4.10 CC, Pre-trial Conferences

Resolution Counsel Litigation Plans

Unresolved matters after Settlement Conferences may be referred to Resolution Counsel for assistance in creating a litigation plan which may incorporate a draft Streamlined Trial Order. These will need to be approved by the Case Conference Justice.

A trial or streamlined trial will thereafter be scheduled to occur within 18 months.

Pre-trial Conferences

The Case Conference Justice will conduct a pre-trial conferences 3 months before trial to ensure readiness for trial.

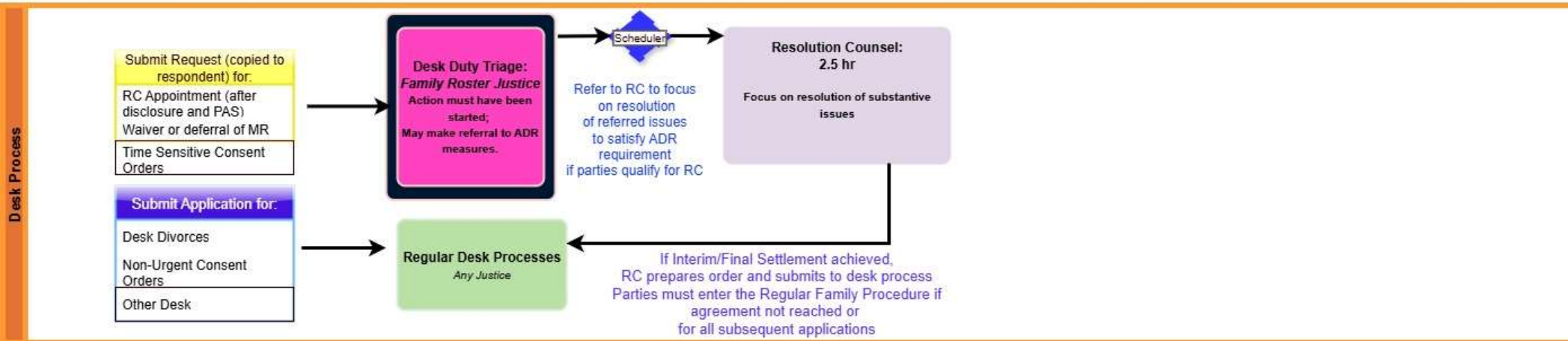
Streamlined Trials or Trials

Any justice may be assigned to oversee family streamlined trials or traditional trials.

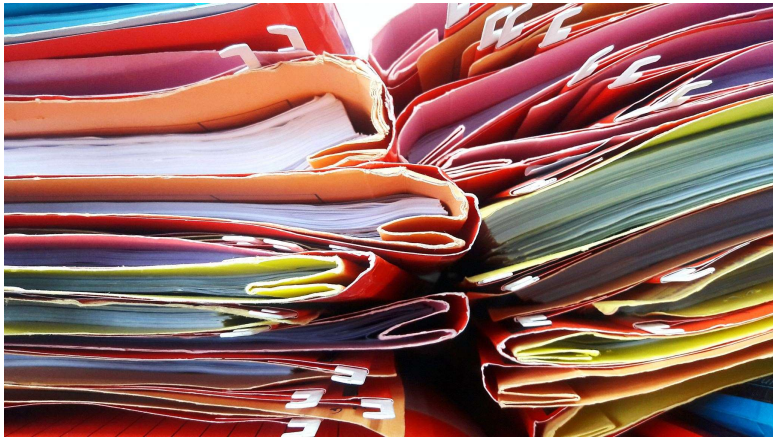
Parties can seek
MR waiver/deferral,
RC meeting or
Time- sensitive consent orders
directly through desk process

Case Conferencing and Adjudication System for Family Matters (Chart A)

SWIM LANE 2 - September 18, 2025



Desk Duty Justice and Desk Processes



Submit Request (copied to respondent) for:

RC Appointment (after disclosure and PAS)

Waiver or deferral of MR

Time Sensitive Consent Orders

Requests for Resolution Counsel



Resolution Counsel Requests

Parties may request a Resolution Counsel meeting before engaging in the FFP process by completing the appropriate form

Eligibility and Conditions

Financial disclosure must be exchanged.

If one party earns less than 90K, either party may apply for RC. If the parties have counsel and sufficient resources, they may be directed to use private mediation services.

Starting in January 2026, the Resolution Counsel slots will be made available province-wide on a first-come, first-served basis.

Waiver/Deferral of MRs



Waiver and Deferral Review

Desk duty justice reviews waiver and deferral requests for MRs.

The Request for Waiver/deferral form must be completed and submitted to the designated clerk.

Time-Sensitive Consent Orders



Time-Sensitive Consent Orders

The Desk Duty Justice will deal with time sensitive Consent Orders.

All other consent orders and desk Divorce Applications will be handled through the regular desk process.

Service-related applications must be made before an Applications Judge.

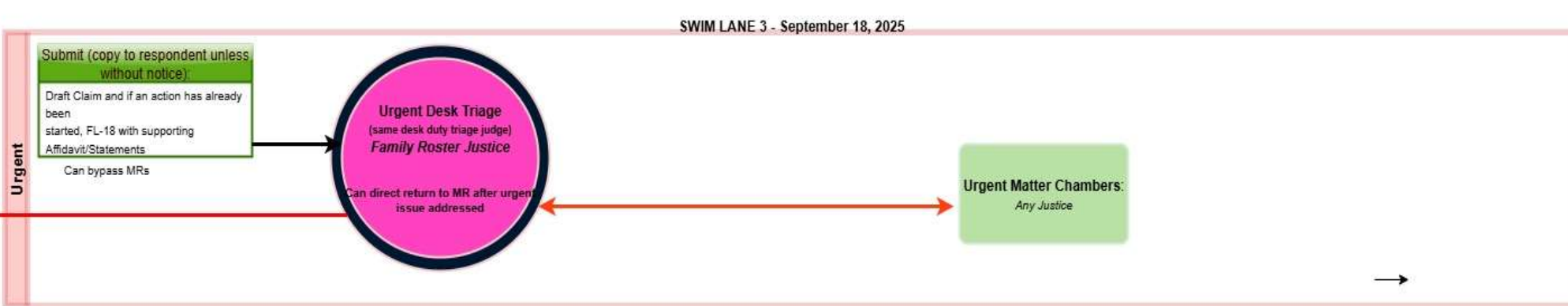
Child's Counsel Request



-
- Parties who consent to the appointment of Child's Counsel may jointly submit a letter and the Legal Aid Referral Form.
 - It is within the court's *parens patriae* powers and sole discretion to determine whether Counsel will be appointed for a Child.
 - If granted, CGO clerk will prepare the standard order and forward it to Legal Aid Alberta
 - This process will speed up and streamline the appointment of counsel. It is anticipated that counsel will be appointed within 30 days.

Case Conferencing and Adjudication System for Family Matters (Chart A)

SWIM LANE 3 - September 18, 2025



Urgent Hearing Requests

The Desk Duty Justice shall vet all requests for an Urgent Hearing, province wide. The existing Urgent request form with draft application/commencement document and affidavit must be submitted to the designated clerk.



Resolution Counsel

**Resolution Counsel (RC):
2.5 hr**

**Focus on resolution of substantive
issues**

**Report back to assigned Case
Conference Justice**

Role and Referral to Resolution Counsel

Referral Sources

Matters are referred to Resolution Counsel by Desk Duty or the Case Conference Justice.

Resolution Counsel Roles

Resolution Counsel assists parties to resolve issues or develop litigation plans after settlement attempts are exhausted.

Collaboration and Communication

When preparing a matter for a litigation Plan/trial Resolution Counsel work closely with justices, accessing reports and communicating to understand case issues.



Conclusion



Structured Case Framework

The protocol offers a clear, consistent framework guiding family law cases from start to finish.

Improved Case Outcomes

Following the protocol enhances the quality and fairness of family law case resolutions.

Efficiency in Justice System

The protocol streamlines processes, increasing efficiency for lawyers and judges alike.