

Early Settlement Panel

Both Mr. Kaplan and Mr. Carlin are active members of the Superior Court's Early Settlement Panel Program.

In 1989 Mr. Kaplan was invited to serve on the Monmouth County Matrimonial Early Settlement Panel, a group of matrimonial lawyers who volunteer time helping other lawyers settle their matrimonial cases. Mr. Kaplan has been an active member of the panel for over 10 years, and was Chairman of the Early Settlement Panel for three years between 1994 and 1997. Mr. Kaplan remains an active panelist today.

The purpose of the Early Settlement Panel ("E.S.P.") is to try to work out a fair and equitable resolution of your matter without the need for a trial. Most cases are settled at some point as opposed to being tried. This is because litigation is expensive, both financially and emotionally, and to ease financial and emotional strain upon litigants, the system encourages settlements.

At your ESP, you and your lawyer will appear before two matrimonial lawyers who are called "the Panel". Your spouse and his or her lawyer will also appear at the same time. Each party has an opportunity to put his/her position forth, in an uninterrupted fashion, while the panelists take notes and ask questions.

The E.S.P. is only designed to help with financial issues such as alimony, child support, property division, and counsel fees. The E.S.P. will not hear issues of custody or visitation. There are other mediation programs available to help you and your spouse resolve custody and visitation issues.

As a result of hearing both spouses' positions, the Panel will make a recommendation as to what it feels a fair settlement of your matter is. If you and your spouse agree to such settlement, you will be able to conclude your divorce matter at that time. If either you or your spouse do not agree and you are not able to settle the case, then the case will be listed for trial at the next available trial date, which will probably be several months away.

Our law firm handles a significant number of divorce cases. Please feel free to [contact us](#) if we may be of service to you.

This article is not intended to be viewed as legal advice. Every case is different, and the reader should be advised to contact an attorney for complete legal advice on a given issue.

By: Steven J. Kaplan, Esq