

## OVERVIEW: TRENDS IN ALTERNATIVE DISPUTE RESOLUTION

Alternative methods for resolving disputes are becoming an increasingly popular substitute for litigation. Traditionally, alternative dispute resolution (ADR) has been used in labor negotiations and other contract disputes. However, the use of ADR has recently expanded to such areas of the law as domestic family disagreements and international commercial disputes. A common thread runs through the range of applications of ADR: no matter what the scale of the controversy, the process is essentially the same.

The following articles present a sampling of the areas in which ADR is currently being used. Linda Silberman and Andrew Schepard explore the desirability of the New York child custody bill, which requires court-ordered mediation in custody disputes under certain circumstances. In her article, Margaret Shaw suggests that ADR is useful in family dispute resolution outside the traditional contexts of divorce and child custody. Thomas Christian illustrates the advantages of mediation on the community level. Finally, Michael Hoellering describes recent trends in ADR on its grandest scale, the resolution of international trade disputes. He argues that ADR hastens the growth of international trade, offering unique advantages where cultural and political differences between parties exist.

