

# Contact with your child

An Easy Read booklet for parents



## How to use this booklet



The Victorian Government Department of Families, Fairness and Housing (DFFH) wrote this booklet. When you see the word 'we', it means DFFH.



We wrote this booklet in an easy to read way. We use pictures to explain some ideas.

**Bold**

We wrote some important words in **bold**.

Not bold

This means the letters are thicker and darker.



We explain what these important words mean.

There is a list of these words on page 20.



This Easy Read booklet is a summary of another document.



You can ask for help to read this booklet.

A friend, family member or support person may be able to help you.

## What is in this booklet?

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## Why did we give you this booklet?



We gave you this booklet because your child is living away from your home at the moment.



The **Children's Court** makes this decision.

The Children's Court is a place where legal decisions about a child can be made.

When we take your child away, they might still be able to talk to or see:



- you



- other members of your family.



We call this **contact**.



The Children's Court decides what the contact is.



Sometimes a **child protection worker** might make this decision instead.

A child protection worker:



- works for the government



- talks to people to find out if a child is safe



- works to keep children safe.

## Different types of contact



There are different types of contact.

You and your child might see each other:



- in person
- on video chat.



You might talk to your child on the phone.

You or your child might write a:



- letter
- email.



Your child might stay at your home overnight.



The Children's Court decides what kind of contact your child has.



But sometimes a child protection worker might make this decision instead.



When they decide about your child's contact, they will think about what your child needs.

## Supervised contact



A child protection worker might stay with you during the contact to make sure your child is safe.



Or someone else might stay with you instead of the child protection worker.

This person can be a:



- friend



- family member.



We call this **supervised contact**.



## How can contact help your child?

Contact helps your child stay in touch with:



- you
- other members of your family.

Contact can help your child:



- have a strong relationship with you



- stay in touch with people they care about while they live away from your home



- work towards going back into your care.

## Having a good experience

Your child will enjoy contact more if it is:



- calm



- respectful



- safe.

If you have contact with your child in person, you might want to bring things like:



- books
- toys
- games or activities.



You can ask the child protection worker if you need help getting these things.

## What if you have questions about your child?



You might have questions that you want to ask the child protection worker about your child.



It is a good idea to make a different time to talk to the child protection worker.



This means your child's contact time will just be about spending time with you.

## Who can have contact with your child?

When your child lives away from your home, the child protection worker must make sure your child:



- is safe



- is cared for



- has their day planned.

When we make decisions about who can have contact with your child, we will think about:



- what your child's needs are



- your family life



- what the Children's Court has said



- the plan the child protection worker has made for your child.



When the decision is made, it's important that only these people have contact with your child.

If the Children's Court says you can't have contact with your child, you cannot:



- see them
- talk to them.

Other people cannot have contact with your child, even if:



- a child protection worker is there
- you know the person well
- the person has met your child before.

## What if you want to bring someone else to the contact visit?



You might want to bring someone with you when you have contact with your child.



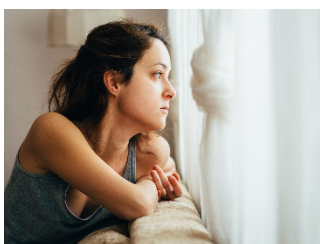
You must talk about this with the child protection worker first.



The child protection worker will decide if the person you want to bring can come with you.



You must give the child protection worker enough time to decide if someone can come with you.



If you do not tell the child protection worker first, that person will not be able to come with you.

## Planning for contact

When the child protection worker plans contact for your child, they will talk to you about:



- who can have contact with your child



- what type of contact a person can have



- when the contact will happen



- where the contact will happen.



They will also talk to you about:



- who will be there



- any rules about the contact



- what will happen if contact can't happen.

## What if you do not agree with the contact plan?

You should talk to the child protection worker if you:



- do not agree with the contact plan



- are not happy with the contact plan.



You can ask the child protection worker about the decisions that have been made about your child.



If the Children's Court made the decision, you can talk to your **legal representative**.

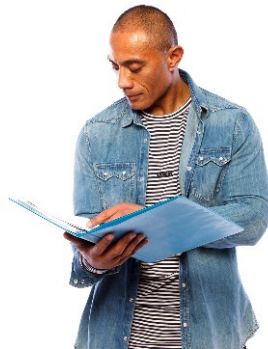


A legal representative is someone who can:

- give you legal support
- support you with legal decisions.



If the child protection worker made the decision, you can ask for a **review**.



A review is when someone checks if something:

- works well
- could be better.



You can ask for a statement of reasons.

This means the child protection worker must write a document that explains why they made a decision.



The child protection worker can tell you how to ask for a review.

## Word list

This list explains what the **bold** words in this document mean.

### **Child protection worker**



A child protection worker:

- works for the government
- talks to people to find out if a child is safe
- works to keep children safe.



### **Children's Court**

The Children's Court is a place where legal decisions about a child are made.

### **Contact**

If we take your child away, they might still be able to talk to or see:



- you
- other members of your family.

We call this contact.

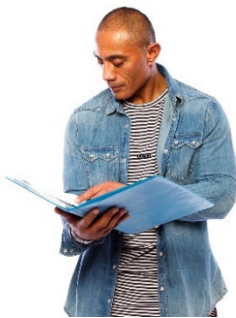


## Legal representative

A legal representative is someone who can:

- give you legal support
- support you with legal decisions.

## Review



A review is a way to check if something:

- works well
- could be better.

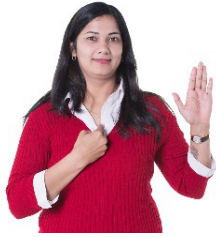


## Supervised contact

Someone might stay with you during the contact to make sure your child is safe.

We call this supervised contact.

## Contact information



The child protection worker's name is:

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Their phone number is:

---



Their email address is:

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The child protection worker's manager is:

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Their phone number is:

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