

This contains general information only, not legal advice. NQDVRS workers do not give legal advice but can help you talk about the issues.

The Department of Child Safety (DChS) has just contacted me to investigate a complaint. What should I do?

- Find out the names of the people involved (the Child Safety Officer, their Team Leader, Manager), which Area Office they come from and the contact number.
- **YOU DON'T HAVE TO SIGN SOMETHING THERE AND THEN SEEK LEGAL ADVICE, ASK FOR TIME TO THINK ABOUT IT.**
- If your children have been removed, ask for any paperwork (there should be a court order or voluntary agreement).
- Keep all the paperwork DChS gives you.
- ALWAYS go to court (even if you are told you don't have to be there)
- It is legal and permissible for you to record a conversation provided that you are one of the people in the conversation (eg you could use your mobile).

Other important things to remember

- EVERYTHING you tell DChS will form part of their assessment. Any evidence could be used in criminal proceedings against you.
- You DO NOT HAVE to answer any of their questions, or you could just answer the ones you feel comfortable with

➤ **REMEMBER**

- Take your time – ask for a break
- If you don't understand, ask for clarification

It's OK to have a support person with you such as a friend, family member, or a lawyer.

The Department has told me to attend a family meeting. What should I do?

- Ask for details, what is the meeting about? Is it a case planning meeting, a general family meeting or a court ordered conference?
- Take time to prepare for the meeting.

I have received a notice to go to Court. What should I do?

- Seek legal advice immediately
- Contact Legal Aid to see whether you are eligible for free legal advice or services – see the listings overleaf.

How should I prepare for Court?

- Get legal advice before you go
- Prepare! Know what you want, make sure your lawyer has enough information. You will be asked questions and have a chance to have your say. REMEMBER, anything you say will be used to make the final decision.
- Be aware of court protocols.
- At court – everything is focused on what is in the best interests of the child.

- The court has to be satisfied that you have had a reasonable opportunity to obtain legal representation.
- A separate representative (i.e. a child's lawyer) may be appointed for your child.
- If your child is mature enough and wants to have a say, the court must be informed.

What types of Orders are there?

- Temporary Assessment Order (TAO) an emergency order, lasts a maximum of 3 days
- Court Assessment Order (CAO) lasts a maximum of four weeks
- Child Protection Order (CPO) an order made by the Court but DChS has to prove that harm has, is or is likely to occur, and there is no parent able or willing to protect the child from harm.
- Intervention with Parental Agreement (IPA) – there are 2 types. An Assessment Care Agreement that must not last longer than 30 days, and a Child Protection Care Agreement which initially should not last longer than 30 days but can be extended up to 6 months, before an extension is granted a case plan must be made.

Want more detailed information?

Ask us for a copy of “*Information Kit on Child Protection for Parents*” published by the South West Brisbane Community Legal Centre. www.swbcls.org.au/childprotection.htm
Extracts from this Information Kit appear throughout this pamphlet.

For DOMESTIC VIOLENCE help

DVCONNECT 1800 811 811
MEN'S INFO LINE 1800 600 636

LEGAL ASSISTANCE

**ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER
COMMUNITY LEGAL SERVICES**

Phone 4722 5111 free call 1800 074 463
34 Stanley Street TOWNSVILLE

INDIGENOUS WOMEN'S LEGAL SERVICE

Phone 4721 6007 St James Place TOWNSVILLE

NQ WOMEN'S LEGAL SERVICE

Phone 4772 5400 free call 1800 244 504
42 Sturt Street TOWNSVILLE

LEGAL AID QLD Phone 1300 65 11 88

TOWNSVILLE COMMUNITY LEGAL SERVICE

Phone 4721 5511,
2/181 Sturt Street TOWNSVILLE

OTHER USEFUL CONTACTS

PARENTLINE is a free, confidential telephone service that provides counselling and referrals. Counsellors are available from 8am to 10pm, 7 days a week Phone 1300 301 300
www.parentline.com.au

KIDS HELP LINE, 24 hrs 7 days

Free call 1800 55 1800 – counselling for children and young people
www.kidshelp.com.au

THE WOMEN'S CENTRE Phone 4775 7555
50-52 Patrick Street AITKENVALE

MENSLINE – 24 Hours, 7 days 1300 789978

DEPARTMENT OF CHILD SAFETY

www.childsafety.qld.gov.au

Central Complaints and Review Unit –
Phone 1800 080 464.
email: complaints@childsafety.qld.gov.au

QUEENSLAND OMBUDSMAN

Investigates concerns about actions and decisions made by state government departments. Free call 1800 068 908

NQDVRs

**Funded by the Department of
Communities**

- Information and referral
- Aardvarc program for children
- Community education & training
- Resources
- Court Support
- Men's Behavioral Change Program

TOWNSVILLE OFFICE

PO Box 6061, Townsville QLD 4810
Phone: 07 4721 2888 Fax: 07 4721 1794
nqdvr@nqdvr.org.au
Mezzanine Floor Metway Arcade,
390 Flinders Street, Townsville

MOUNT ISA OFFICE

PO Box 502, Mt Isa QLD 4825
Phone: 07 4743 0946 Fax: 07 4743 7999
minqdvr@bigpond.net.au
The Old Court House Building, Isa Street

<http://www.nqdvr.org.au>

Against Violence # 16

**INFORMATION
ABOUT
CHILD PROTECTION
AND
THE DEPARTMENT OF
CHILD SAFETY**

WHAT DO I NEED TO KNOW?



**NORTH QUEENSLAND
DOMESTIC VIOLENCE
RESOURCE SERVICE**