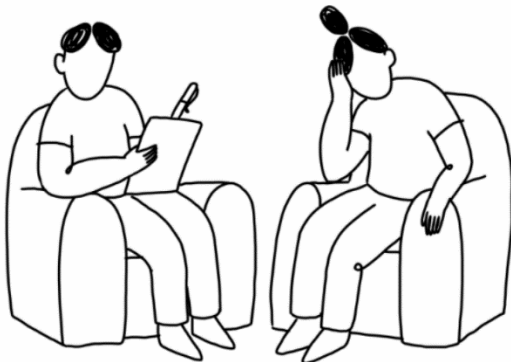


Tips for working with the Department

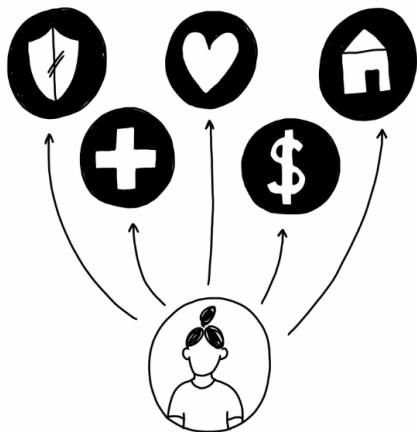


FAMILY VIOLENCE LAW HELP

www.familyviolencelaw.gov.au



- Get legal advice as soon as the Department become involved with your family. A lawyer can help make sure the Department is doing things properly and can help you understand what is going on.
- Speak to your caseworker so you can understand why the Department is getting involved with your family.
- Try to get along with your caseworker even if you don't agree with the reasons they are involved with your family.
- Remember that everything you say to a caseworker gets written down and can be used against you as evidence if the matter ends up in court. Nothing that you tell your caseworker is confidential.
- You can have a support person with you when you meet with caseworkers. You should choose someone who can help keep things calm and will help you to remember what was said after the meeting.
- You can ask the caseworker questions to better understand why the Department is involved with your family and what they want you to work on.
- If a caseworker asks you to engage with services or supports to improve your parenting or make sure your children are safe, then you should follow through with their referrals. All families need help at some point, and engaging with these services may stop things getting worse and your children being taken away from your care.



- If your caseworker asks you to work with a service, you should:
 - follow up with the support services and programs the Department asked you to work with
 - write down the services' contact details and your appointment dates in your diary
 - try to attend all your sessions and keep notes
 - if you can't go to a session, let your lawyer or caseworker and the service know and tell them why you can't make it.



- It may be important to keep notes and records about the Department's involvement with your family. This might include:
 - keep any paperwork you're given including agreements, orders or letters. Make sure you show these to a lawyer and get legal advice
 - if the Department is involved with your family because of domestic and family violence, keep any documents you have to do with the Domestic Violence Order or to do with police
 - keep a diary or journal. Write down all of your meetings, appointments and court dates so you don't forget them
 - take notes in your diary whenever you talk to your caseworkers and any other services. Write down who you spoke to, when and what was said
 - write in your diary any calls you make to your lawyer and caseworkers, even when you just leave a message and don't speak to them. If possible, get the name of who takes your message and write it down with the time and date
 - ask the Department for a copy of all notes from meetings you go to with them
 - keep a record of all courses you attend and services you engage with. Keep any certificates you are given
 - keep all your documents together in a safe place.

