

The Department want to talk to me about my children



FAMILY VIOLENCE LAW HELP

www.familyviolencelaw.gov.au



If the Department want to talk to you about your children, it means they have received a report that your children may be at risk of harm.

The Department:

- may send a caseworker to your house to talk to you or they may ask you to go to their office
- may get a caseworker to talk to your children at school. They don't need your permission to speak with your children
- can also get information about your family from your doctor, hospital, police, teachers or family members - they don't need your permission to do this.



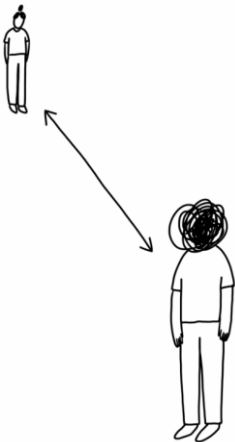
The Department won't automatically remove your children from your care because there is domestic and family violence. Children are only usually removed as a last option.

After the Department investigates a report, they may decide everything is okay. Sometimes they may want to work with your family so your children stay in your care while steps are taken to improve their safety.



It's important to try to work with the Department, even if you don't agree with the reasons they are getting involved with your family.

Below are some things the Department may ask you to do, depending on your situation. Every family is different. What the Department may ask you to do will depend on your case.



I've experienced domestic and family violence – what can the Department ask me to do?

- Stay away from the other person, and to keep the children away from them. This could mean living separately or separating if you were in a relationship. It's important to put your children's safety first.
- Get a Domestic Violence Order or to help police when they apply for a Domestic Violence Order. You can get legal advice about this.
- Get Parenting Orders to limit the other person's involvement with the children. Sometimes Parenting Orders can help but sometimes it might not be a good option for you. It's important to get legal advice about your situation.
- Work with a support service or do a parenting program. The Department can't force you to do this, but these services can help make things better for you and your children.
- Participate in meetings, conferences or assessments. These are different in each State and Territory, so you should get legal advice about what is involved.
- Make a written agreement with the Department about your children. An agreement is different to Care Orders, which are made by a court. There are different types of agreements. They may:
 - set out things for you to do to keep your children safe
 - be for your children to live somewhere else while you complete the steps you have to take
 - only last for a set period of time.





If the Department want to enter into an agreement with you, you should get legal advice. It is important to understand what your agreement means and to make sure you can do everything you have agreed to do. If you don't want to or can't follow an agreement, you should get legal advice.

If you have experienced domestic and family violence, it's important to work with the Department to keep you and your children safe.