

# Child protection conferencing

## Information for parents

If you have opposed a child protection application, the Queensland Courts will schedule a court-ordered child protection conference. This information can help you learn more about the conference and what to expect.

### How does the conference work?

A child protection conference is a guided meeting about a child protection matter.

The people involved get together to talk about their concerns and try to reach an agreement on the order without needing to go to a court hearing.

#### The court sets the date for the conference.

You'll be given a notice telling you when and where the conference will be held.

A conference usually takes about 2 hours. It is sometimes split into different sessions for the parents if appropriate.

### Before the day of the conference

You'll receive a call from an intake officer at the Child Protection Conferencing Unit (CPCU).

The call usually includes:

- information about the conference process
- who else will be present and what issues they might raise
- what you want to discuss and how to communicate this effectively
- how you feel about the application
- what might happen if an agreement is or isn't reached.

There will also be time to ask questions about the process.

### What happens at the conference?

**The conference is run by a trained mediator called a convenor.**

The convenor is impartial and is not on anyone's side.

Their job is help everyone to:

- talk together in a respectful way
- suggest alternative solutions
- make decisions that are in the best interests of the child or children
- ensure a fair and just process for everyone involved.

**You'll have a chance to talk about:**

- your current worries or concerns for the children
- your case plan progress and goals
- efforts made to remedy child protection issues
- the best future interest of the children
- what is currently working well for the children
- what to report on the form 20.

### Your cultural needs

The CPCU understands that everyone has different cultural needs. We will adjust the conference to meet yours and your children's cultural needs as best we can. We'll also ask the other people attending the conference to respect your cultural needs too.

## Who attends the conference?

People listed on the Court Notice must attend the conference.

Other participants may include:

- a representative of the Office of Director of Child Protection Litigation (ODCPL).
- legal representatives
- a Separate Representative appointed by the court
- interested parties as directed by the court
- a representative of the Office of the Public Guardian
- An independent Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander entity (if the children are Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander)
- the children, where appropriate.

## Support persons

A support person may attend the conference if approved by the Convenor. Support persons are a non-speaking role.

## Trauma informed process

The CPCU knows that everyone has had different life experience and provides a trauma informed process. This means that the convenor and CPCU staff will treat everyone with an understanding that they may have been through trauma.

## What happens after the conference?

A report (form 20) must be provided to the court and all participants by the convenor after the conference.

If an agreement has been reached, only this will be included in the report. If the court is satisfied that the agreement is the most appropriate, they may make final orders at the next mention.

If no agreement was found, the court may set a date for a final hearing.

## More information

Call the CPCU on 07 37387018 or email [cpcu.mailbox@justice.qld.gov.au](mailto:cpcu.mailbox@justice.qld.gov.au) if you have a question or enquiry.

