



**Australian Government**  
**Attorney-General's Department**

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# **Changes to laws about how the family court gets information**

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**May 2024**



**Easy Read version**

## How to use this document



The Australian Government Attorney-General's Department (AGD) wrote this document.

When you see the word 'we', it means AGD.



We wrote this document in an easy to read way.

We use pictures to explain some ideas.

**Bold**  
Not bold

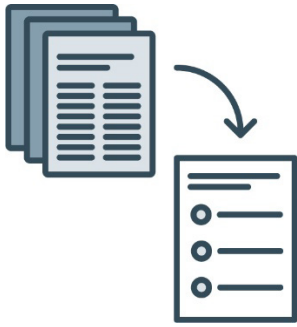
We wrote some important words in **bold**.

This means the letters are thicker and darker.



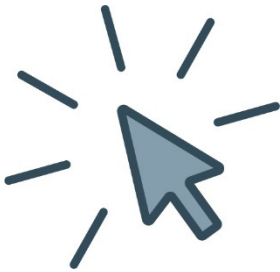
We explain what these words mean.

There is a list of these words on page **20**.



This is an Easy Read summary of another document.

This means it only includes the most important ideas.



You can find the other document on our website.

[www.ag.gov.au/families-and-marriage/publications/family-law-amendment-information-sharing-act-2023-factsheet-parents-and-parties](http://www.ag.gov.au/families-and-marriage/publications/family-law-amendment-information-sharing-act-2023-factsheet-parents-and-parties)



You can ask for help to read this document.

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

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# About this document



Some laws about the **family court** changed on **6 May 2024**.



The family court is a place where a judge can make legal decisions for families and children.



This document will help you understand how these new laws will work.



This information is not legal advice about what you should do.

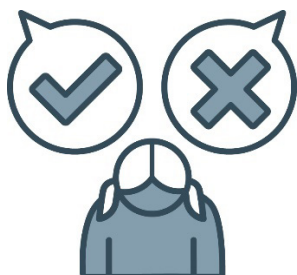


If you need support with a legal problem, you can ask someone else before you decide what to do, such as a **lawyer**.

A lawyer is someone who knows and understands the law.

## About the new laws

The new laws might affect you if:



- you and your child's other parent can't agree on who will care for your child

and



- you have gone to the family court to decide who will care for your child.



The new laws have changed how the family court can get information about whether a child is safe.



This includes information about whether a child is safe from **family and domestic violence**.

Family and domestic violence is when someone close to you hurts you, such as:



- your partner, like your boyfriend or girlfriend
- a member of your family
- someone who takes care of you
- someone you live with.



This includes information about whether a child is safe from **abuse**.

Abuse is when someone treats you badly.

This can include when someone:



- hurts you



- scares you

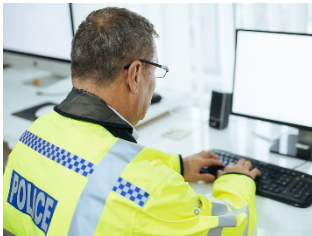


- controls you.



This also includes information about whether a child is safe from **neglect**.

Neglect is when someone is not taking care of you the way they are supposed to.



It is now easier and quicker for the family court to get this information from police.



It is now easier and quicker for the family court to get this information from organisations that keep track of people who:

- buy guns
- use guns
- sell guns.



It is now also easier and quicker for the family court to get this information from **child protection**.



Child protection helps children stay safe.



Child protection can decide if a child:

- is not safe in their home
- must live with someone else.



These new laws mean that the family court can now ask for information at any time when they make a legal decision about a child's safety.



And they can use this information as **evidence** when they make a legal decision about the child.

Evidence is proof that something is true.



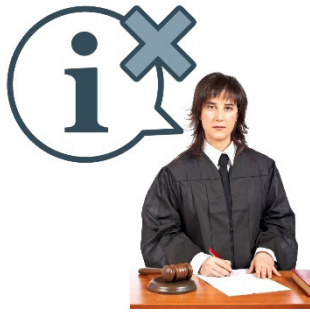
You can't stop the family court from asking these organisations for information.



But you can ask your lawyer if the family court can use any of this information as evidence.



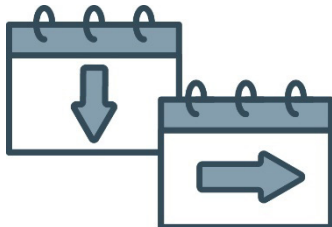
You might also want to ask these organisations for information yourself.



But you can only do this if the family court has not already asked them for information.



When this happens, you must ask the family court before contacting the organisations.



These new laws will affect any decisions the family court:

- are already working on
- will make in the future.

# Information the family court can ask for and use



The family court can ask for any information that could tell them about whether a child is safe from:

- family and domestic violence
- abuse
- neglect.

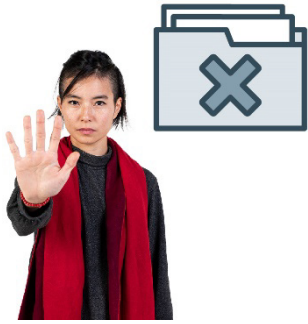


The family court might ask for information about anyone harming the child or their parent.

This includes anyone harming them in the past.



The family court might ask for information that shows the child or their parent is not safe.



There might also be information the family court can't use.



For example, if using that information would make someone unsafe.

## Keeping information safe



The new laws will make sure that the family court only uses people's information in a way that is safe.

For example, they will:



- think about the safety of people who the information affects



- only use people's information to make legal decisions about a child's safety.

## More information



You can read more about the new laws on the Attorney-General's website.

[www.ag.gov.au/families-and-marriage/families/family-law-information-sharing](http://www.ag.gov.au/families-and-marriage/families/family-law-information-sharing)



You can read the Family Law Amendment (Information Sharing) Act 2023 on the Australian Government website.

[www.legislation.gov.au/C2023A00088/asmade/text](http://www.legislation.gov.au/C2023A00088/asmade/text)



If you need legal advice, you can find more information on our website.

[www.ag.gov.au/families-and-marriage/publications/family-law-services-and-support-fact-sheet](http://www.ag.gov.au/families-and-marriage/publications/family-law-services-and-support-fact-sheet)

## Help and support



There are people and services who can support you.



You can talk to someone you trust, like a friend.



There are also organisations who can help.

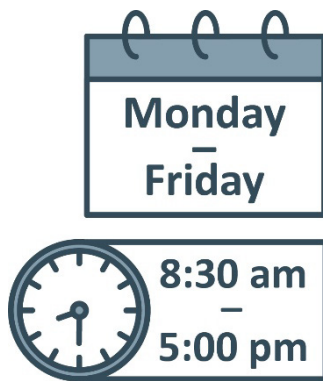
We have included some free services below.

## Family court



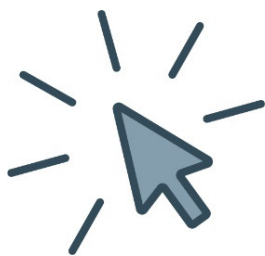
If you need to speak to someone about your situation in the family court, you can call them.

**1300 352 000**



You can call the family court:

- Monday to Friday
- 8:30 am to 5:00 pm.



You can also visit their website.

**[www.fcfcoa.gov.au/contact-us](http://www.fcfcoa.gov.au/contact-us)**

## National Relay Service



You can call the National Relay Service if you:

- are deaf or hard of hearing
- find it hard to speak using the phone.

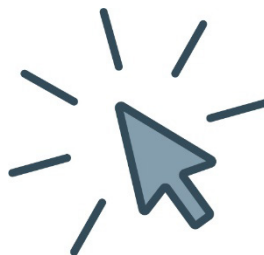


You can call them any time.

**1800 555 660**



Then you can give them the phone number you want them to call.



You can also visit their website.

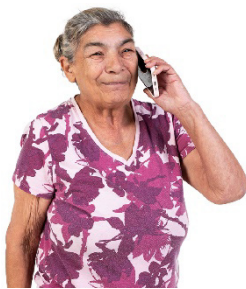
[www.accesshub.gov.au](http://www.accesshub.gov.au)

## Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS)



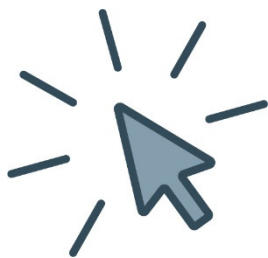
If you speak a language other than English,  
TIS can help you:

- talk to someone
- understand what they are saying.



You can call TIS any time.

**131 450**



You can visit their website.

**[www.tisnational.gov.au](http://www.tisnational.gov.au)**

# Word list

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

## **Abuse**

Abuse is when someone treats you badly.



This can include when someone:

- hurts you
- scares you
- controls you.

## **Child protection**

Child protection helps children stay safe.



Child protection can decide if a child:

- is not safe in their home
- must live with someone else.



## **Evidence**

Evidence is proof that something is true.

## **Family and domestic violence**

Family and domestic violence is when someone close to you hurts you, such as:



- your partner, like your boyfriend or girlfriend
- a member of your family
- someone who takes care of you
- someone you live with.



## **Family court**

The family court is a place where a judge can make legal decisions for families and children.



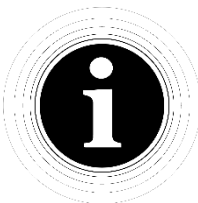
## Lawyer

A lawyer is someone who knows and understands the law.



## Neglect

Neglect is when someone is not taking care of you the way they are supposed to.



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