

Frequently asked questions

What if I am not sure what to do?

Before your visit, please talk to your child safety officer about some ideas to make family contact time work well and end on a positive note.

Can I bring food?

Yes, food can be a great addition to contact. Healthy snacks are always a good idea (for example, nuts and raisins, fruit, sandwiches, muesli bars, rice crackers or cheese snacks).

What happens if I am late?

Sometimes you can't avoid being late, but it is important to let your child safety officer know by phone. If it is an ongoing problem, talk to your child safety officer about any changes you can make to help you to arrive on time.

What is my role?

Your responsibility is to maintain good contact with your child and keep this time positive and focused.

What is the role of the child safety officer/supervisor?

- To offer you support, advice, and ideas to help make the time you spend with your child better.
- To offer support to your child.
- To make contact feel safe.
- To make sure that contact takes place in line with the case plan.

How is face-to-face contact reviewed?

Face-to-face contact is reviewed when your child's case plan is reviewed, or more frequently if required. This is your opportunity to have some input into any changes you would like to happen with family contact.

What can I do if I am unhappy with contact arrangements?

Firstly, talk with your child safety officer about your concerns. If this doesn't help, you can talk to the team leader or manager of your child safety service centre.

If you still have concerns, you can ask to speak to the client relations officer at your regional office or the department's Complaints and Review Unit on 1800 080 464.

If you feel that a decision made by Child Safety is wrong, you can contact the Queensland Civil Administrative Tribunal, who are able to review specific decisions in relation to contact. You can phone the Tribunal on 1300 753 228 or visit www.qcat.qld.gov.au for more information.

Contact information

For more information about family contact, you can contact the department by:

- calling your child safety officer
- visiting your local child safety service centre
- calling general enquiries on **1800 811 810** or **3224 8045**

You can also visit

www.communities.qld.gov.au/childsafety

Family contact

Information for parents



What is family contact?

Family contact includes a range of direct and indirect contact with family members (for example, face-to-face visits, telephone calls, SMS messaging, letters and emails). This information sheet focuses on face-to-face visits.

All family contact is arranged through your child safety officer and is an important part of your child's case plan to keep their connection with family. Many children and young people have told us that contact with their families has a positive impact on how they see themselves.

Contact visits are arranged between you and your child safety officer so that your child can spend some quality time with you and your family. We want to help you achieve your goals and connect with your child in a relaxing and comfortable environment.

Other people who are important to your child are also welcome to attend (for example, siblings, grandparents, aunts, uncles, other family and friends). Please discuss this with your child safety officer beforehand.

What are the goals of contact?

- A time for you and your child to share some enjoyable and meaningful time together.
- Contact is an important time for maintaining and strengthening your connection with your child.

- A time to share good things that have happened to both of you.
- An opportunity to stay up to date with your child's progress and important activities in their life.
- An opportunity for you to contribute to your child's learning and development.

What type of contact is there?

Contact may be either supervised or unsupervised. It can take place at your child safety service centre, at your home or at a location in the community (for example, the library, a park, a community centre or in a playground).

Some ideas for positive contact

- Arrive on time — children sometimes feel quite worried about family contact and if you are late, your child might worry that something has happened to you, or that you are not coming to see them, so it is important that you arrive at the agreed upon time.
- Be drug and/or alcohol free before and during contact visit. This will help you pay full attention to your child's needs during the contact visit and keep them safe.
- Ask your child about what is going on in their life — this will help keep the conversation going and show your child that you are interested in them (for example, talk to them about who their school friends are, books they enjoy and activities they like to do).

- Offer some praise and encouragement to your child — he or she will feel appreciated and loved.
- Share some positive things about what's happening in your life — your child is interested in what is going on in your life, so try and share positive things with them to help them feel better about the situation.
- Build ground rules — family contact runs more smoothly if there are some good ground rules in place, such as taking turns to speak and no arguing or yelling.
- Be prepared for this time spent with your child — this means thinking about what you might like to do during your time with your child (for example, foods that you can bring with you, things to talk about, toys or games to play).
- Remember that contact needs to be positive for you and your child. It may be an emotional time for you, however it is important to:
 - be calm and appropriately manage your feelings.
 - expressing anger towards your child, their carer or the department will be confusing and upsetting for your child. This may affect future opportunities to see your child.
 - talk about things appropriate for your child — don't talk about case work or court work. This is for adults to discuss.

If contact isn't going well for you and your child, your child safety officer might talk with you about changes you can make.

