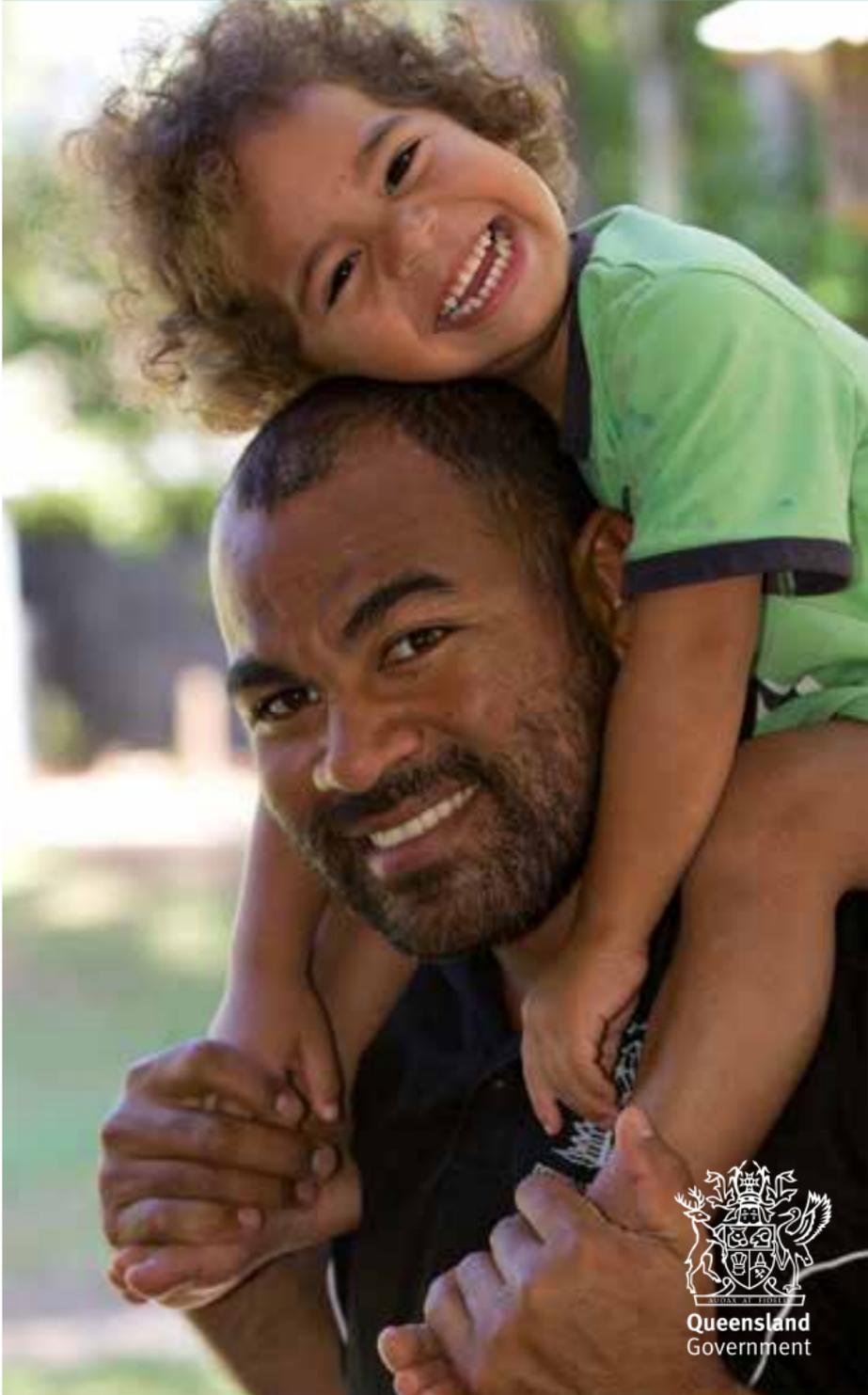


Family Group Meetings

Helping parents to safely care for their children



What is a Family Group Meeting?

All children have the right to be loved, nurtured and protected. We want to help you and your family to be happy and healthy, and for your children to feel safe and cared for.

A Family Group Meeting is held when the Department of Children, Youth Justice and Multicultural Affairs (Child Safety) is concerned that your child is at risk of harm, or in need of protection.

The meeting is organised by a convenor who brings together the most important people in your child's life. Everyone at the meeting will have a chance to talk about what is happening, and what changes can be made for your child to be safe.

The meeting will help you and Child Safety to develop a plan to care for your child. This is where you can decide on the things that need to change, and what actions you will take for your family life to be better.

Who will be at the meeting?

People who may attend the family group meeting include:

- your child, if he or she is old enough to participate, and if appropriate
- other family members or people who are close to your child
- family members or friends who can support you
- your legal representative (if you have one)
- a member of your child's community if your child is Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander, or from a different cultural background



- your Child Safety Officer or Senior Team Leader
- your child's teacher
- a family support worker or domestic violence support worker.

Getting ready for the Family Group Meeting

Your Child Safety Officer will talk to you about their concerns for your child's safety and the things that need to happen for your child to stay safe. We want to support you and help you to protect and care for your child.

To prepare for the meeting, the convenor will ask you to think about what is happening in your family, what is working well and what isn't. These are some of the things that will be discussed at the meeting.

You may want to write a letter or draw a picture to explain your thoughts and feelings.

You will be encouraged to think about who you would like to invite to the meeting. The people you invite can support you and help you make decisions about keeping your child safe. You will be asked if there are any special family customs or traditions that you would like to be included in the meeting.

The convenor will work with you to organise a time and place for the meeting, and help you to understand what will happen at the meeting.

What happens at the Family Group Meeting?

At the meeting, the Child Safety Officer will talk about why they think your child is at risk of harm or in need of protection, what has happened to help you and your child, and what has worked well and what hasn't.

Everyone at the meeting will be asked to share their concerns and their hopes for the future of your family.

During the meeting, you and your family will have some time alone to talk about the concerns and what changes you can make for things to be better. It is important that you take as much time as you need to make the right decisions for your child and your family.

A case plan will be put together about what needs to happen for your child to be cared for. Typically, the plan will set out:

- your child's needs
- the needs of your family
- what will be done to help your child
- what will be done to help your family
- who will be helping your child and your family
- when your child and family will receive this help.



What happens after the Family Group Meeting?

Your Child Safety Officer will work with you and your child to make the changes agreed in the case plan.

You can call your Child Safety Officer at any time to discuss the plan or any concerns you have about it.

The case plan will be reviewed within six months of the Family Group Meeting. If the plan doesn't work, another Family Group Meeting may be organised.

Contact information

We are here to help you and your child, so please ask us if there is anything you do not understand.

For more information about Family Group Meetings or case plans, you can talk to your Child Safety Officer or your Family Group Meeting convenor.



