

*This contains general information only, not legal advice. NQDVRs workers do not give legal advice but can help you talk about the issues.*

**The Department of Child Safety (DChS) has just contacted me to investigate a complaint. What should I do?**

- Find out the names of the people involved (the Child Safety Officer, their Team Leader, Manager), which Area Office they come from and the contact number.
- If your children have been removed, ask for any paperwork (there should be a court order or voluntary agreement).
- **If DChS wants you to sign something there and then, YOU DON'T HAVE TO. SEEK LEGAL ADVICE, ASK FOR TIME TO THINK ABOUT IT.**
- Keep all the paperwork DChS gives you.
- ALWAYS go to court (even if you are told you don't have to be there)

**Other important things to remember**

- EVERYTHING you tell DChS will form part of their assessment. Any evidence could be used in criminal proceedings against you.
- You DO NOT HAVE to answer any of their questions, or you could just answer the ones you feel comfortable with
- REMEMBER
  - Take your time – ask for a break
  - If you don't understand, ask for clarification

It's OK to have a support person with you such as a friend, family member, or a lawyer.

**The Department has told me to attend a family meeting. What should I do?**

- Ask for details, what is the meeting about? Is it a case planning meeting, a general family meeting or a court ordered conference?
- Take time to prepare for the meeting.

**I have received a notice to go to Court. What should I do?**

- Seek legal advice immediately
- Contact Legal Aid to see whether you are eligible for free legal advice or services – see the listings overleaf.

**How should I prepare for Court?**

- Get legal advice before you go
- Prepare! Know what you want, make sure your lawyer has enough information. You will be asked questions and have a chance to have your say. REMEMBER, anything you say will be used to make the final decision.
- Be aware of court protocols.
- At court – everything is focused on what is in the best interests of the child.
- The court has to be satisfied that you have had a reasonable opportunity to obtain legal representation.
- A separate representative (i.e. a child's lawyer) may be appointed for your child.

- If your child is mature enough and wants to have a say, the court must be informed.

**What types of Court Orders are there?**

- Temporary Assessment Order (TAO) an emergency order, lasts a maximum of 3 days
- Court Assessment Order (CAO) lasts a maximum of four weeks
- Child Protection Order (CPO) an order made by the Court but DChS has to prove that harm has, is or is likely to occur, and there is no parent able or willing to protect the child from harm.

**Want more detailed information?**

Ask us for a copy of “*Information Kit on Child Protection for Parents*” published by the South West Brisbane Community Legal Centre.

**[www.swbcls.org.au/childprotection.htm](http://www.swbcls.org.au/childprotection.htm)**

*Extracts from this Information Kit appear throughout this pamphlet.*

**WHATEVER YOU DO, if you have fears for your or your children's safety, consider making a safety plan to use if you have to leave in a hurry. And REMEMBER acts of domestic violence and the outcome of those acts are the SOLE responsibility of the person committing them!**

**For DOMESTIC VIOLENCE help**

DVCONNECT 1800 811 811  
MEN'S INFO LINE 1800 600 636

**LEGAL ASSISTANCE**

**ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER  
COMMUNITY LEGAL SERVICES**

Phone 4722 5111 free call 1800 074 463  
34 Stanley Street TOWNSVILLE

**INDIGENOUS WOMEN'S LEGAL SERVICE**

Phone 4721 6007 St James Place TOWNSVILLE

**NQ WOMEN'S LEGAL SERVICE**

Phone 4772 5400 free call 1800 244 504  
42 Sturt Street TOWNSVILLE

**LEGAL AID QLD** Phone 1300 65 11 88

**TOWNSVILLE COMMUNITY LEGAL SERVICE**

Phone 4721 5511,  
2/181 Sturt Street TOWNSVILLE

**OTHER USEFUL CONTACTS**

**PARENTLINE** is a free, confidential telephone service that provides counselling and referrals. Counsellors are available from 8am to 10pm, 7 days a week Phone 1300 301 300  
[www.parentline.com.au](http://www.parentline.com.au)

**KIDS HELP LINE**, 24 hrs 7 days

Free call 1800 55 1800 – counselling for children and young people  
[www.kidshelp.com.au](http://www.kidshelp.com.au)

**THE WOMEN'S CENTRE** Phone 4775 7555

50-52 Patrick Street AITKENVALE

**MENSLINE** – 24 Hours, 7 days 1300 789978

**DEPARTMENT OF CHILD SAFETY**

[www.childsafety.qld.gov.au](http://www.childsafety.qld.gov.au)

Central Complaints and Review Unit –  
Phone 1800 080 464.

email: [complaints@childsafety.qld.gov.au](mailto:complaints@childsafety.qld.gov.au)

**QUEENSLAND OMBUDSMAN**

Investigates concerns about actions and decisions made by state government departments. Free call 1800 068 908

**NQDVRs**

**Funded by the Department of  
Communities**

- Information and referral
- Aardvarc program for children
- Community education & training
- Resources
- Court Support
- Men's Behavioral Change

**TOWNSVILLE OFFICE**

PO Box 6061, Townsville QLD 4810  
Phone: 07 4721 2888 Fax: 07 4721 1794  
[nqdvr@nqdvr.org.au](mailto:nqdvr@nqdvr.org.au)  
4th Floor, Northtown Building  
Flinders Mall (above the City Library)

**MOUNT ISA OFFICE**

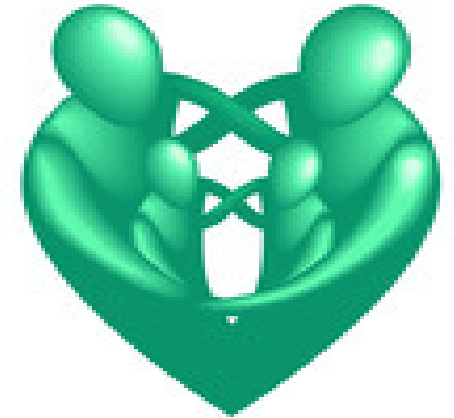
PO Box 502, Mt Isa QLD 4825  
Phone: 07 4743 0946 Fax: 07 4743 7999  
[minqdvr@bigpond.net.au](mailto:minqdvr@bigpond.net.au)  
The Old Court House Building, Isa Street

<http://www.nqdvr.org.au>

**Against Violence # 16**

**INFORMATION  
ABOUT  
CHILD PROTECTION  
AND  
THE DEPARTMENT OF  
CHILD SAFETY**

**WHAT DO I NEED TO KNOW?**



**NORTH QUEENSLAND  
DOMESTIC VIOLENCE  
RESOURCE SERVICE**