



What you need to know about your Child Impact Report

What is a Child Impact Report ("CIR")?

A Child Impact Report is prepared by a Court Child Expert who works in the Court Children's Service (See the court [Fact Sheet](#)).

Only the parties (children and lawyers are not included) are interviewed individually for 30-60 minutes each, often on the same day.

Each party will have a chance to explain their views and concerns and be provided with an opportunity to respond to some of the claims the other party has made about them and the children.

There will also be a child meeting on a separate day. On the day, the children can talk to the Court Child Expert if they wish, about their feelings and experiences of living in the family. The Court Child Expert may observe the children with each parent.

Often clients expect Court Child Experts to analyse and make a judgment about conflicting statements and positions but that is not their job.

The conference gives the Court a general understanding or summary of the family situation and ***what issues are in dispute between the parties.***

Who are Court Child Expert?

Court Child Experts are qualified psychologists or social workers, who work for the Family and Federal Circuit Court of Australia. They are often the first time the court hears about the matter from a neutral third party and the court places some significance on their report.

WHAT IS A CHILD IMPACT REPORT

WHO ARE COURT CHILD EXPERTS?

ARE CONVERSATIONS WITH THE COURT CHILD EXPERT CONFIDENTIAL?

WHAT HAPPENS AFTER A CHILD IMPACT REPORT CONFERENCE?

HOW MUCH DOES A CHILD IMPACT REPORT COST?

FOCUS AREAS

STRATEGIES FOR SUCCESS



Is the interview confidential?

No - anything said to a family consultant can be used in their report and provided to court.

What happens after the meetings?

The report is usually made available to your lawyer within one to two weeks (times may vary). A copy of the report will be put on your court file and recommendations will be made to the court about parenting moving forward. They usually serve as useful tools for decision makers to make short term or interim orders in relation to the parties. The report often make recommendations for parties to attend post-separation parenting courses, anger management courses or substance abuse tests to be carried out where necessary. The court generally makes orders to reflect such recommendations.

Unfortunately, if you don't like the report or you perceive there to be an error- you cannot change it.

Your lawyer may raise any significant errors with the court at the next court date and the court may place less weight on the report or particular issue if the Judge sees fit.

How much does a Child Impact Report cost?

A Child Dispute Conference is ordered and provided by the Court. There is no cost to either party.

Focus areas

- Risk factors
- The ability of parents to work together
- The child/ren's developmental needs
- How the child/ren may be experiencing the family situation
- Whether there are any possibilities for negotiation

How to prepare your child for the conference

- Explain to your child that they are going to meet with someone who would like to talk to them about their experiences and thoughts, but they do not have to talk about anything if they do not want to
- Do not coach or tell your child what to say to the Court Child Expert

For more information about seeing Court Child Expert, see flyers designed for:

- kids aged 5-8:

https://www.fcfcoa.gov.au/sites/default/files/2022-05/bkyounger_1109_edited0522.pdf

- kids aged 9-12:

https://www.fcfcoa.gov.au/sites/default/files/2022-05/bkolder_1109_edited0522.pdf

- teenagers:

https://www.fcfcoa.gov.au/sites/default/files/2022-05/bkteens_edited_0522.pdf

Can I contact the Court Child Expert after the report is released?

No, the Court Child Expert cannot discuss the report with you or accept further information from you.

Can I share the Child Impact Report?

No, you cannot share the report to others including family members or professionals without the Court's permission. It is an offence to publish or disseminate to the public, or a section of the public, any part of proceedings that identifies a party, a witness, or certain other persons, under section 121 of the Family Law Act.

Strategies for Success

- Stay child focused!
- Don't make personal attacks on the other parent.
- Prepare a short list of points beforehand that directly relate to the benefits of the child/ren ie. meaningful relationship with each of their parents, need for connection and time with extended family members.
- Share how you can support your child/ren's needs.
- Raise any concerns for your child/ren's welfare and what you think could assist.
- Acknowledge that you understand the concerns raised by the other parent.