

Support for separating parents

Separation can be an emotionally difficult time for parents and children. This information sheet provides information about organisations in Western Australia who offer support and assistance for separating parents and their children.

Specialist services

The following services specialise in providing support to separating families.

Family Relationship Centres

Family Relationship Centres provide information and support to separating families including:

- counselling
- programs and information sessions, and
- Family Dispute Resolution (mediation).

There are Family Relationship Centres in Perth and regional areas across Western Australia.

You can use 'Find Local Help' on the Family Relationship Centres Online website www.familyrelationships.gov.au to find your nearest centre or call the Family Relationship Advice Line **1800 050 321** (Monday to Friday 8am to 8pm, Saturday 10am to 4pm).

Relationships Australia

Relationships Australia provide a range of separation services including:

- counselling
- courses and workshops
- supervision services, and
- Family Dispute Resolution (mediation).

Visit the Relationships Australia website www.relationships.org.au or call **1300 364 277**.

Anglicare WA

Anglicare WA provide a range of separation services including:

- counselling
- education programs
- supervision services, and
- Family Dispute Resolution (mediation).

Anglicare offers both face to face counselling and telephone counselling to people anywhere in Western Australia including rural and remote regions.

Anglicare WA separation programs include:

- Anglicare WA Mums and Dads Forever program (assists families to reduce conflict and develop positive ways to communicate after separating), and
- Anglicare WA Supporting Children After Separation program (provides support for young people up to 18 years of age of parents who are separating).

Visit the Anglicare WA website www.anglicarewa.org.au or call **1300 114 446**.

Centrecare

Centrecare WA provide a range of separation services including:

- counselling
- supervision services, and
- Family Dispute Resolution (mediation).

Services are provided in Perth and to communities in WA's Goldfields and South West regional areas.

Visit the Centrecare website

www.centrecare.com.au or call **(08) 9325 6644**.

Lifeline WA

Lifeline WA's Separated Dads and Separated Mums programs provide support to parents, during and after separation or if they have experienced bereavement in a partnership as a parent or a child.

The counselling team provides individual support, education, and group workshops. Visit the Lifeline WA website www.wa.lifeline.org.au or call **(08) 9261 4444**.

Family Dispute Resolution

Family Dispute Resolution (FDR) is a type of mediation to help you and your ex-partner try to work out arrangements for your children following separation. FDR can also be used to work out how property will be divided after separation.

An FDR conference is run by an FDR Practitioner who is independent. This means they are not on your side or the side of your ex-partner. Their role is to help parents focus on the needs of their children and reach an agreement in the best interests of their children.

In most cases the law requires you to try FDR before starting a case in the Family Court of WA about children. There are some exceptions to this, including urgent cases or where there is a risk of family violence or child abuse.

FDR providers

FDR is provided by both government funded organisations, Legal Aid WA and private practitioners.

The following services provide FDR:

- Family Relationship Centres
- Relationships Australia
- Anglicare WA, and
- Centrecare.

Each service has its own in-take process you can find out about by contacting the service. Typically the service will try to speak to both parents to find out information about the family situation and then decide if an FDR conference is suitable.

Legal Aid WA Dispute Resolution Service

Legal Aid WA's Dispute Resolution Service runs conferences to help separated couples work out arrangements for children and how property will be divided.

To be able to use this service, either you or your ex-partner need to qualify for a grant of aid.

At the conference both parents are represented by a lawyer. You can find more information about Legal Aid WA's Dispute Resolution Service on the Legal Aid WA website www.legalaid.wa.gov.au or call the Infoline **1300 650 579**.

Private FDR practitioners

You can use the following to find a private FDR Practitioner:

- The 'Family Dispute Resolution Register' on the Family Relationships Online website www.fdr.ag.gov.au, and
- 'Find a Lawyer or Organisation' on the Family Law Practitioners Association of WA website www.flpawa.com.au.

Private FDR practitioners usually charge a fee for their services.

amica

amica is a secure online tool, created by National Legal Aid, which can be used to work out arrangements for your children and how property and money will be divided.

amica works best for separated couples who are able to communicate well.

It should not be used if there has been family violence or abuse.

amica was designed by family lawyers to guide you through the process from beginning to end. amica explains legal concepts around separation in simple language.

When working out how to divide property, amica uses artificial intelligence to make suggestions based on the information you and your ex-partner enter.

The artificial intelligence takes into account the following:

- your assets and debts
- agreements commonly reached by other couples in similar situations, and
- how courts generally divide property in similar situations.

If you and your ex-partner agree how to divide your property and money, amica can suggest orders and pre-fill the paperwork to file with the court to formalise the agreement.

There is a small cost if you want amica to record an agreement in writing and pre-fill court paperwork.

amica is free if you or your ex-partner are on an income support payment.

Find out if amica is suitable for you by visiting www.amica.gov.au

Legal advice

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If you are experiencing, have experienced or are at risk of family violence, how and what parenting arrangements are made are often affected. It is recommended you get legal advice before attempting to negotiate with your ex-partner about arrangements about the children or agreeing to attend FDR.

Legal Aid WA

Other Legal Aid WA services which can assist following separation include:

- Virtual Office, a network of virtual offices in local community agencies across the state. Contact Virtual Office by calling **(08) 9261 6376**.
- Family Court Services, a duty lawyer service at the Family Court of WA in Perth which can assist with urgent family law issues.
- Family Advocacy and Support Services (FASS), a specialist family violence service at the Family Court of WA that provides legal and social support services to people with family law problems who are affected by family violence.
- Domestic Violence Legal Unit (DVLU), a specialist unit which provides legal advice and assistance with Family Violence Restraining Orders (FVRO's) and social support services.

Other legal services

Other organisations may be able to provide you legal advice and assistance following separation, including:

- **Community Legal Centres**, you can find your nearest community legal centre using 'Find a Community Legal Centre' on the Community Legal WA website www.communitylegal.wa.org.au
- **Aboriginal Family Legal Services (AFLS)**, you can find your nearest service on the AFLS website www.afls.org.au or by calling **1800 469 246**.

Private solicitors

You can use 'Find a Lawyer' on the Family Law Practitioners Association of WA website www.flpawa.com.au to find a private solicitor who works in family law.

You can also use 'Find a Lawyer or Organisation' on the Law Society of Western Australia website www.lawsociety.wa.asn.au.

Family violence services

If you are the victim of family violence you may need assistance with safety and related issues.

There are a range of services that can assist. See Infosheets, [Staying safe: Getting ready to leave](#) and [Staying Safe: After you leave](#).

Supervision services

Children's contact services aim to provide a safe, neutral, child-focused environment.

They can assist with the handover of children between parents or supervise children's visits with a parent.

They can help children and parents spend time together where visits are difficult because of conflict between parents or concerns about safety.

Most commonly, a family will use a children's contact services because there are Family Court orders which require supervised handovers or visits.

Some specialist services such as Relationships Australia, Anglicare WA and Centrecare provide supervision services.

Private supervision services are also available for a fee.

Court services

The Family Court of WA is a specialist court which makes decisions about family law issues when parents or other people involved in children's lives have not been able to agree on arrangements for children or how property and money will be divided.

You can find a range of information, videos, brochures and kits on court processes and how the court makes decisions on the Family Court of WA website www.familycourt.wa.gov.au

Legal Aid WA resources

You can find a range of information, videos and fact sheets, infosheets and easy read guides about both children and property issues after separation on the Legal Aid WA website www.legalaid.wa.gov.au

LEGAL AID WA OFFICES



Infoline: 1300 650 579



Translating & Interpreting Service:
131 450



Website/InfoChat:
www.legalaid.wa.gov.au



National Relay Service: 133 677
(for hearing and speech impaired)

Perth Office

32 St Georges Terrace, Perth, WA
6000
1300 650 579
(08) 9261 6222

Midwest & Gascoyne Office

Unit 8, The Boardwalk, 273
Foreshore Drive,
Geraldton, WA 6530
(08) 9921 0200

West Kimberley Office

Upper Level, Woody's Arcade,
15-17 Dampier Terrace,
Broome, WA 6725
(08) 9195 5888

Great Southern Office

Unit 3, 43-47 Duke Street,
Albany, WA 6330
(08) 9892 9700

Goldfields Office

Suite 3, 120 Egan Street,
Kalgoorlie, WA 6430
(08) 9025 1300

East Kimberley Office

98 Konkerberry Drive,
Kununurra, WA 6743
(08) 9166 5800

Southwest Office

7th Floor, Bunbury Tower, 61
Victoria Street,
Bunbury, WA 6230
(08) 9721 2277

Pilbara Office

28 Throssell Road, South
Hedland,
WA 6722
(08) 9172 3733

Indian Ocean Office

Administration Building,
20 Jalan Pantai, Christmas Island,
Indian Ocean, WA 6798
(08) 9164 7529

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