



## Children Support Services

**Date :** December 24, 2015

The breakdown of a marriage can be a difficult time for all members of family, particularly children. Parties may harbour anger and resentment towards each other and this can negatively affect a child's environment and relationships with their parents. In the event of a breakdown of a marriage or de facto relationship, the Court looks towards a resolution in the best interests of the child. The child's well-being is paramount in child custody proceedings.

The first compulsory step to take before commencing any family law legal proceedings in relation to children is to speak with a Family Dispute Resolution practitioner. They are specialist family law counsellors or mediators who provide assistance in discussing arrangements for children.

While some cases are resolved without going to Court, there are exceptions in which both parties feel it is necessary to move forward with court proceedings in child custody matters. In the event of this, the Court can order that children be represented by their own lawyer during parenting proceedings. The Independent Children's Lawyer offers an independent view of what is in the best interests of the children they represent.

There are numerous organisations which aim to help children of different ages and maturity to cope with the separation of their parents.

[Kids Helpline\(link is external\)](#) is a free 24-hour counselling service for young people aged between 5-25 years old. The Hotline is designed to allow children to speak confidentially with a counsellor regarding any issues they may be facing. The counsellors can offer advice to improve their situation, and facilitate better relationships with family members.

[Relationships Australia\(link is external\)](#) is an organisation which provides services to enhance family relationships, as well as provide support for individuals, couples and families who need help with parenting and separation.

[Family Relationship Centres\(link is external\)](#) operate across Australia. For those unable to reach the centres, the Family Relationship Advice Line is open.

The Centres also offer a [Children's Contact Service\(link is external\)](#), which provides separated parents a safe and positive contact arrangement to pick up and drop off their kids. This enables ongoing contact between both parents, which is a positive aspect of a child's well-being.

[Click here for more information on custody disputes.](#)



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For advice about child custody related issues contact us on **1800 300 170** or email us at **[familylaw@matthewsfolbigg.com.au](mailto:familylaw@matthewsfolbigg.com.au)**

**Disclaimer**

***Family law situations can be complex and sometimes they can involve serious issues. Information outlined is proposed to provide general guidance only. Due to the seriousness of legal matters as well as the uniqueness of your individual situation, professional advice should be sought. For advice, please contact one of our Family Lawyers.***