The Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services is the lead child protection agency in Queensland and is required by law to ensure that children are safe from abuse, neglect and harm in their homes.

When the department receives information about harm or risk of harm to a child (up to 18 years of age) and suspects that they may require protection, Child Safety Officers will complete an investigation and assessment to determine the ongoing safety needs of the child.

Who can contact Child Safety with a concern?

Anyone can contact Child Safety if there is a concern about a child they believe has been harmed or is at risk of harm.

The law prohibits Child Safety from disclosing the identity of the person who provided the information to the department.

What happens when Child Safety Officers visit my home?

When Child Safety Officers visit your home, they are required to show proof of their identity and explain the reason for their visit. In certain circumstances, they may need to work with the police. Child Safety Officers may also work with a Recognised Entity if your child is Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander.

You have a right to know the concerns that have been received about your family and to respond to the concerns. You can talk to the Child Safety Officers, or if you wish to have a support person or legal representative with you, in most situations you can arrange another time to discuss these concerns.

The Child Safety Officers will see and talk to each child in your family about the concerns. If the Child Safety Officers have information that your child may be injured, a medical appointment may need to be arranged.

When required, the Child Protection Act 1999 allows Child Safety Officers to talk to your child at school or at childcare, before talking with you. If this occurs, a Child Safety Officer is required by law to contact you as soon as possible to discuss the concerns with you.

If the Child Safety Officers assess that there are safety issues for your child in the home, they will develop a safety plan with you.

What happens next?

The Child Safety Officers may need to arrange additional visits to talk with you and your child. They may also need to contact other people who play an important role in your child’s life such as teachers, day-care workers, relatives or doctors. You can assist by telling the Child Safety Officers which people play an important role in your child’s life and provide their contact details.

If your child is Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander, Child Safety will work with a Recognised Entity to make significant decisions.

Once the Child Safety Officers have collected all of the necessary information, a risk evaluation will be completed and an assessment made to determine whether your child needs protection and if further departmental contact is required.

Child Safety Officers have a legal responsibility to advise you of the outcome of their assessment. If a decision is made that your child needs protection, the Child Safety Officers may take legal action to protect your child. This process will be explained to you.

What happens if I do not talk to the Child Safety Officers?

You may choose not to talk to the Child Safety Officers. However, they must continue to investigate and assess the concerns received by the department and talk to your child.

Child Safety Officers can make a better assessment if you cooperate and provide information about your child and family situation.

Who can I talk to for further information?

It is important that you understand what is happening and why Child Safety Officers visit your home. If you do not understand the reason for the visit, ask the Child Safety Officers to explain it.

If you still do not understand what is happening or you are concerned about what has happened, you can contact the Team Leader or the Manager of your local child safety service centre.

You are also entitled to seek legal advice or support from other organisations about your contact with Child Safety.
What if I do not agree with a decision made by the Child Safety Officers?

If you are unhappy about any decision made by Child Safety about your child, you can ask to have the decision reviewed. The Child Safety Officers will provide you with information about the complaint process.

If you are still not satisfied with the response from Child Safety, you may speak to one of the following external agencies:

- Queensland Civil and Administrative Tribunal (QCAT) Freecall 1300 753 228
- Queensland Ombudsman Freecall 1800 068 908
- Crime and Misconduct Commission Freecall 1800 061 611
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Legal Services Head Office 3025 3888 or 1800 012 255

Is information recorded about my family confidential?

Information recorded about your family is confidential. However, Child Safety may share some information with other government agencies or non-government service providers. The purpose of sharing information is to help assess the concerns received about your child and to coordinate services when the department continues working with your family after the investigation and assessment is completed.

You can apply for a copy of the information recorded about you through the department’s Right to Information, Information Privacy and Screening branch on 1800 809 078.

If you need help communicating in English, contact the Australian Government Translating and Interpreting Service on 131 450.

Contact information

It is a parent’s right to understand what is happening throughout this process. Parents can ask questions at any stage.

The Child Safety Officer or a team leader from the child safety service centre are available to assist parents as required.

Child Safety Officer

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Team leader

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Child safety service centre

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Telephone

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For further information

The Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services

During business hours: 13 QGOV (13 7468)
Child Safety After-Hours Service Centre: 3235 9999 or freecall 1800 177 135


Legal advice

You are able to seek legal advice or support from other agencies such as Legal Aid Queensland about your contact with Child Safety Services and to ask for advice.

Legal Aid Queensland: 1300 651 188