

What is Family and Child Connect?

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As part of the Stronger Families reform program, community-based intake and referral services, known as 'Family and Child Connect' provide an additional pathway for referring concerns about children and their families.

Family and Child Connect provides information and advice to people seeking assistance for children and families where there are concerns about their wellbeing. Families who find themselves in need of support can also access Family and Child Connect for advice and help.

A Principal Child Protection Practitioner employed by Child Safety is based at each Family and Child Connect to assist with identifying and responding to more serious concerns that may require statutory intervention.

A specialist domestic and family violence practitioner works within each service to advise and assist on domestic and family violence matters.

While serious concerns should be reported to Child Safety, families who are at risk of entering or re-entering the child protection system can be referred to Family and Child Connect.

The role of Family and Child Connect

The role of Family and Child Connect is to:

- provide information, assessment and advice
- actively engage with families and refer them to support services
- lead a local level alliance of government and non-government services.

Referring to Family and Child Connect

When a referral is made to Family and Child Connect, an initial assessment of the concern is undertaken and a range of responses are considered. These responses may include:

Information and advice

Family and Child Connect provides information and advice to the referrer on how they may respond. This may include advice on how to keep the family engaged and information on local support services that may be of help.

Referral to a support service

Family and Child Connect assists the referrer to refer the family to a support service. Family and Child Connect may assist the referrer to gain the family's consent to the referral, and facilitate engagement between the referrer and the support service to ensure a smooth process.

Active engagement and referral to Intensive Family Support services

Where families have multiple or complex needs, the Family and Child Connect service engages them in a more detailed needs assessment and seeks their consent to be referred to an Intensive Family Support service.

Report to Child Safety

If Family and Child Connect receives information to suggest that a child may be in need of protection, a report will be made to Child Safety.

The Principal Child Protection Practitioner based at Family and Child Connect can assist to identify concerns which should be reported to Child Safety and facilitate this reporting process.

Local level alliance

Family and Child Connect leads local level alliances of government and non-government services within the community to ensure vulnerable children and families receive the right mix of services at the right time.

Family and Child Connect locations

There will be 20 Family and Child Connect services established across Queensland from 2015.

The first seven locations opened in January 2015 in Townsville, the Sunshine Coast (including Gympie), Toowoomba, Roma (satellite service), Beenleigh/Bayside, Logan and the Gold Coast.

Locations scheduled for July 2015 are Browns Plains/ Beaudesert, Maryborough/Bundaberg, Rockhampton/Gladstone/Emerald, Kingaroy, Moreton Bay and Ipswich.

Locations scheduled for 2016 are Mackay, Mt Isa/Gulf, Brisbane North, Brisbane South, Brisbane South-West, Cairns, and Cape York/Torres Strait.

Further information

For more information about Family and Child Connect, contact the Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services on **3225 8740** or go to **www.qld.gov.au/strongerfamilies**