

# Legal Aid ACT



## What is family dispute resolution?

Legal Aid ACT



Easy English

## Blue words

Some words in this book are **blue**.

We write what the blue words mean.

## Help with this book



You can get someone to help you

- understand this book
- find more information.

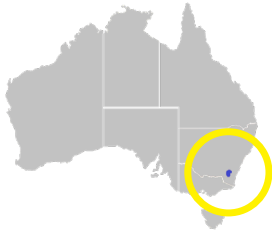


Contact information is at the end of this book.

## About this book

**Legal Aid ACT**

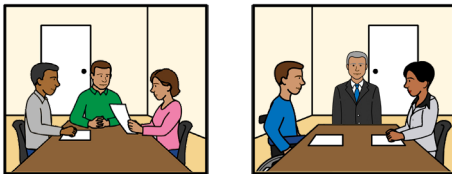
This book is from Legal Aid ACT.



We help people in Canberra with  
**legal problems.**



A legal problem is a problem with the law.

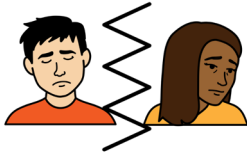


This book is about **family dispute resolution**  
or FDR.



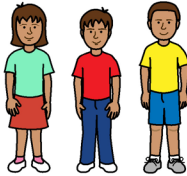
Family dispute resolution is when family  
members try to end an argument over a  
legal problem.

## What can the problem be about?



The legal problem can be about

- your divorce



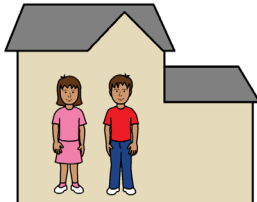
- your children



- your money



- your home.



The problem can be about where your children will live in the future.



The problem might be about **child abuse**.

Child abuse is when someone hurts a child.



You might be afraid that your child is **not** safe with your ex partner.

## How can you end the problem?

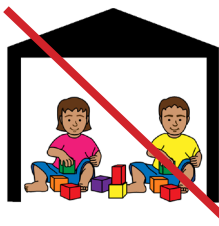


You can go to court with the problem.

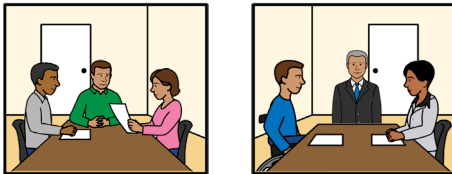


The law says you can only go to court if

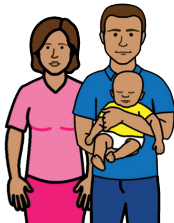
- the problem is very urgent



- your children are **not** safe.



If the matter is **not** urgent you must have an **FDR conference** first.



An FDR conference is a meeting between

- family members

and



- people who understand the law.



You can ask your lawyer to help you in the meeting.

## Why can an FDR conference be a good idea?



An FDR conference can help you agree on what to do without going to court.



If you do **not** go to court you can

- save money



- save time



- have less stress.

# Who will be at the meeting?

The people who can be at the FDR conference are



- you



- the other family member
  - for example, your ex partner



- lawyers



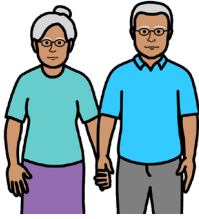
- a **convenor**
  - a convenor is a person who runs a meeting



- an **interpreter** if you need one
  - an interpreter is a person who can give messages from one language to another



- a support person if you need one.



Your support person could be

- a family member



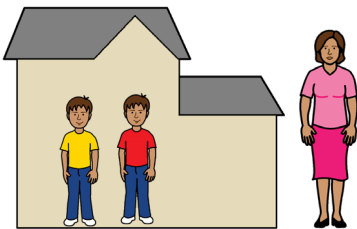
- a friend



- your support worker.



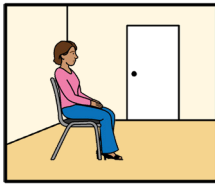
Your support person may need to leave the room when people talk about private things.



You **cannot** bring children.



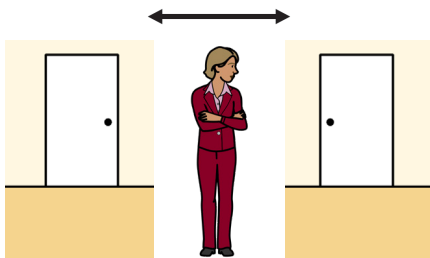
## What happens at the meeting?



You will be in your own room.



The other family member will be in another room.

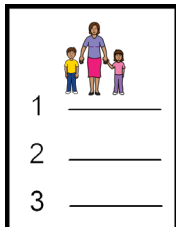


The convenor will

- move between your room and the other room



- listen to everyone



- help make a plan for you and your children.



The FDR conference can last for 3 hours.



You might be alone in your room for some time.



The FDR conference is **confidential**.



Confidential means nobody else will know what people talk about in the rooms.



If the convenor hears something that makes them think your children are **not** safe, they can

- call the police



- tell the court

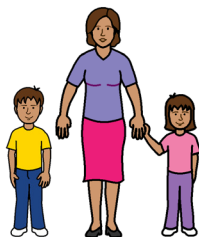


- tell child protection



- end the meeting.

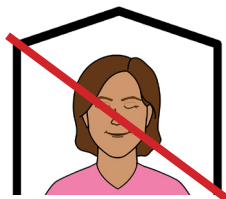
## What if you cannot go?



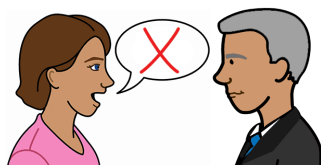
You **must** go to the FDR conference

- if the problem is about your children

or



- you are **not** safe.

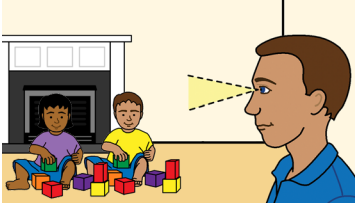


Speak to your lawyer if you **cannot** go.

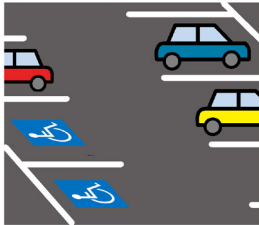
## Before the meeting



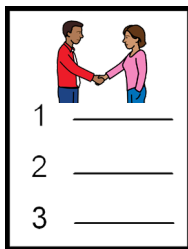
Tell your lawyer if you do **not** feel safe.



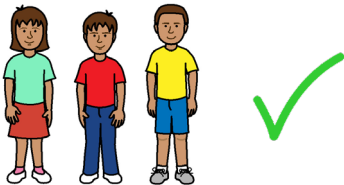
Find a person who can look after your children while you are at the meeting.



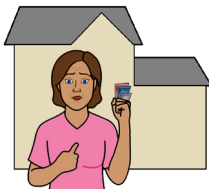
Think about where you can park for 3 hours if you come by car.



Think about how you and the other family member could make a plan for the future.



- What would be best for your children?



- What do you want for your home and money?

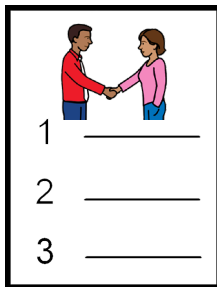


- Is there a better way to talk to each other?

## If you agree

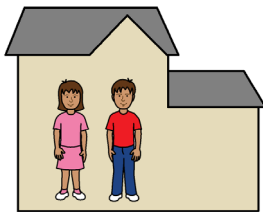


If both parents agree at the meeting you can make a plan for the future.



## You can make a parenting plan.

A **parenting plan** is a plan between two family members that says what should happen next.



A parenting plan says

- where your children will live



- where you can see your children



- how often you can see your children.



The parenting plan is **not** a law.



Talk to a lawyer if someone breaks the plan.

**You can also get a consent order.**

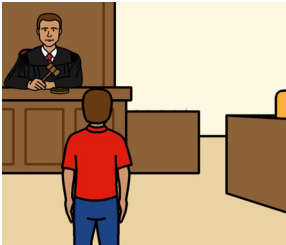


A **consent order** is when a court makes rules you **must** follow.

✓	_____
✗	_____
✓	_____
✗	_____
✓	_____

1	_____
2	_____
3	_____

A consent order is different to a parenting plan.

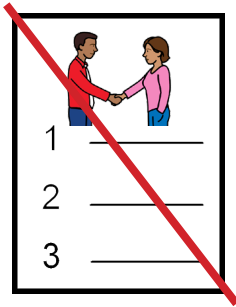


You can get in trouble with the court if you break the consent order.



Talk to your lawyer if you do **not** want to get a consent order.

## If you do not agree



You might not be able to make a plan for the future at the FDR conference.



The problem might be that

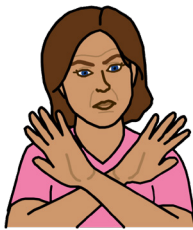
- the other family member does **not** want to agree

or



- the other family member does **not** show up

or



- the problem is hard to agree on.



If you **cannot** agree you might get a **certificate**.

A certificate is a letter.

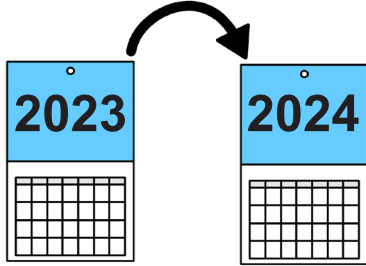


The letter says that you have tried to end the problem at an FDR conference.

## What happens next?



If you get a certificate you can ask the court to decide how to fix the problem for you.



You have 1 year after the FDR conference to ask the court.



We can help you go to court.

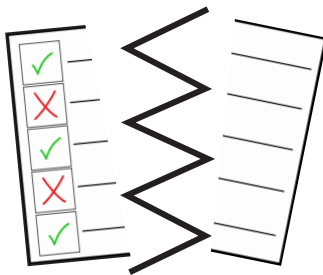


We can also help you if

- you have a consent order

and

- the other family member breaks the rules.

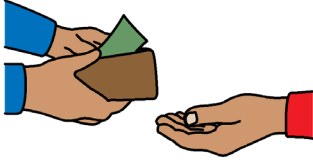




## What is the cost?



You may need to pay **5 hundred** dollars for the FDR conference.



If you do **not** have enough money, we can help you pay for the FDR conference.

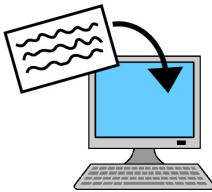
## How to contact us



For more information contact our helpline.



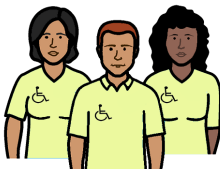
Call            1300 654 314



Email           helpline@legalaidact.org.au



Website       [legalaidact.org.au](http://legalaidact.org.au)



We have trained workers to support you if

- you have a disability



- you are an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander person



- you want to talk to someone from your culture.

## If you need help with English



Use the free Translating and Interpreting Service or TIS to make a phone call.

You can call the TIS in your language.



Call            131 450

Give the TIS officer the phone number you want to call.



## If you need help to speak or listen

Use the National Relay Service to make a phone call.

You must sign up to the service first.



Call            1800 555 660



Website    [accesshub.gov.au/nrs-helpdesk](https://accesshub.gov.au/nrs-helpdesk)

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