

WHAT IS A CHILD-INCLUSIVE CONFERENCE?

The Family Court has the ability to direct that couples in a dispute regarding their children, attend a child-inclusive conference. So, what is that? It is a court-ordered assessment by a family consultant to consider the issues in dispute about the children.

The Family Consultant interviews each parent and the children and then assists the Court by making suggestions about what needs to be considered for the children. The conference briefly explores each parents perspective, but the focus is on how the issues impact the children. It also provides an opportunity for the parties to discuss arrangements for the children and negotiate their own agreement. The discussions held at the conference are reportable to the Court.

The process usually involves the family consultant first speaking with the adults. The consultant will then talk to the children. The purpose of talking to the children is to find out what has been happening and what is important to them. After seeing the children, the consultant may give feedback to the adults about this.

A court-ordered child-inclusive conference has a limited time and is not a full family assessment. At the conclusion of the process, the consultant will either give an oral report to the Court or write a memorandum to the Court, and the parents will receive a copy.