



Case meetings – Information for carers and parents

A case meeting is an opportunity to talk about the wellbeing of a child or young person in care and discuss any support needed, any issues or achievements.

Case meetings aim to achieve good outcomes for the child or young person in care.

Families, the child or young person (where appropriate), their carers, other significant people and relevant agencies are invited to discuss issues, share information, make suggestions, participate in decision-making and identify goals.

The case meeting may involve getting everyone together face-to-face or over the phone. The child or young person's caseworker organises the meeting and either they or their supervisor helps run it.

There are many different reasons for holding a case meeting. Some of these include:

- a child or young person enters care
- a plan is being developed to reunite a child or young person with their family
- the child or young person has an unplanned change in placement
- there is a change of caseworker
- a critical incident has occurred which may affect the child or young person
- during placement reviews.

Case meetings may be called different things such as case conferences, case review meetings and protection planning meetings. These meetings are the first step in developing or reviewing a case plan.

Case plan

A case plan outlines steps and responsibilities to help meet children and young people's day-to-day and longer-term placement and support needs. This includes ways to keep a child or young person connected with their family and community, their health and wellbeing, education, emotional and social development.

A case plan clearly identifies goals and outcomes, key actions, the roles and responsibilities of all relevant people and how the plan will be monitored. The goals in the case plan aim to build on the strengths of the child or young person, their family, carers and community.

What happens at the meeting

Generally, the caseworker, carers, parents or other family members and the child or young person (depending on their age and whether or not they wish to) attend the meeting.

The caseworker introduces everyone and explains the meeting's purpose. The previous case plan is reviewed and comments made on what has or has not been achieved since the plan was drawn up. The meeting then focuses on the agenda and each item is discussed at length. If a child or young person is not at the meeting the caseworker is mainly responsible for making sure their views and wishes are expressed.

Notes of the discussion are taken and kept as minutes of the meeting. After the meeting the case plan is updated by the caseworker or a new one is created. All people at the meeting get a copy of the case plan when it is finalised.

If you have any issues after the meeting, or disagree with anything in the case plan, discuss this with your caseworker. If the issue remains unresolved, you can speak with your caseworker's supervisor or their manager.

If you wish to make an official complaint you can talk to a DoCS complaints officer by phoning FREECALL 1800 000 164, 9 am to 4 pm Monday to Friday. Or you can contact the Ombudsman at www.ombo.nsw.gov.au.

Being prepared

As a parent or carer there are a few things you can do to make sure you are prepared and able to fully take part in a case meeting.

- If you have an issue you think is relevant ask your caseworker to put it on the agenda at the start of the meeting or talk to them before the meeting.
- Be on time because you may miss out on raising some of your issues or hearing important information.
- Bring any relevant information with you such as recent medical information, school letters and awards.
- Think about any questions or concerns you may have before the meeting and how you can ask these in a caring way.
- Be open to sharing information and answering questions.

