

How can this Family Relationship Centre help?

We support people experiencing relationship difficulties and families experiencing separation, by providing information, referrals and family dispute resolution (FDR).

Family dispute resolution

FDR is a type of mediation that helps separating families to resolve their family law disputes. These disputes may include conflict over parenting plans and arrangements for the care of children, child support, financial matters or property settlements.

With the assistance of an accredited FDR practitioner, also known as a mediator, the people involved:

- **identify** the issues that need to be resolved
- **are supported to communicate** with each other clearly and respectfully
- **explore and discuss** different ideas and options
- **negotiate** about these options
- **try and make agreements** about some or all of these issues
- where a child is involved, **focus on the child's best interests**.

FDR practitioners are impartial, act independently and do not take sides. They facilitate discussions and manage the FDR process. They do not control what is discussed or make decisions for the participants - the participants decide what to talk about and determine what decisions are made.

FDR can happen with both people involved in the dispute in the same room (joint FDR), or with the two people in separate rooms (shuttle FDR). In certain circumstances you may be able to be assisted by a legal practitioner.

Contact details

Sunshine Family Relationship Centre

1 Clarke Street (corner of Dickson Street), Sunshine

Ph: (03) 9313 0444

Email: enquiries@sunshinefrc.org.au

Visit: www.rav.org.au



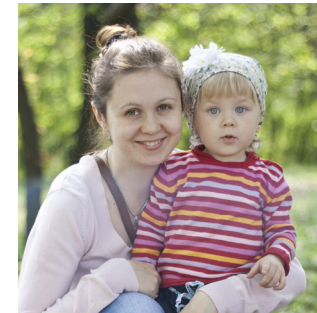
Where can I find more information?

The **Family Relationship Advice Line** is a national telephone service for families affected by relationship or separation issues. **Call 1800 050 321** 8am and 9pm Monday to Friday, and 10am and 4pm on Saturday.

Family Relationships Online provides information for all families - whether together or separated - about family relationship issues, including services to assist families. Visit www.familyrelationships.gov.au



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An Australian Government Initiative



FDR for parenting matters

Under Australian family law, before filing in court for parenting orders, it is compulsory to attempt FDR. There are some exemptions, such as cases involving child abuse or family violence.

FDR provides an opportunity for parents to discuss how they can best continue to parent after separation, while maintaining a focus on their children's best interests. A parenting plan can be developed as part of FDR. A parenting plan is a voluntary agreement that may cover the day-to-day responsibilities of each parent, practical considerations of the children's daily life, and how parents consult and agree on important issues about their children.

Before starting FDR, each participant may be asked to attend an information session that focuses on post-separation parenting and the FDR process.

Child-inclusive FDR

Child-inclusive FDR gives a child an opportunity to explain how things are going for them at the moment and to help parents to make decisions in FDR.

With both parents' agreement, an FDR practitioner can refer a child to meet with a highly-skilled child consultant. The consultant will provide feedback to parents on the child's hopes, worries and needs, which can be considered when making decisions in FDR.

FDR for property and financial matters

When you separate, you may need to make decisions about property and financial issues. We can assist you to resolve any disputes you have around property and financial matters through FDR.

How do I get started with FDR?

Before starting FDR, each participant attends an assessment to ensure that FDR is suitable for their circumstances.

Who can use these services?

A referral is not needed to use our services. Anyone can contact the centre for information and advice. We are committed to providing an inclusive service for all families, and we acknowledge and respect the diverse needs and backgrounds of families in our community.

Are the services free?

This Family Relationship Centre is funded by the Australian Government, however, fees may apply for some services depending on your financial circumstances and the number of appointments you attend. Any applicable fees will be discussed with you when you book an appointment.

Will my details be kept private?

You will be asked for some personal details, along with general demographic information upon attendance. Your privacy is important to us and will be protected. We will only disclose personal information if you give permission or if required or authorised to by law, for example, to protect someone from harm.



Do I need to book an appointment?

You don't need a booking to get information about programs and services available in your local area that can strengthen family relationships. Appointments are needed to attend assessments and FDR. Please contact the centre to make an appointment.

Who can come with me?

If it is appropriate and by prior arrangement, you may be able to bring a support person with you to attend your assessment and FDR appointments.

Children are not permitted to attend appointments with you. Please let us know if you need a list of nearby child care facilities. If you cannot make child care arrangements, you must bring a friend or support person with you to mind your children.

What if I need an interpreter?

We will arrange an interpreter if needed at no additional cost to you. Please contact us in advance to discuss your needs.

Safety

We are committed to providing a safe environment and can put in place arrangements to protect your safety, and the safety of your children and our staff. Please let us know as soon as possible if you have any safety concerns.