

# GOING TO COURT

## PARENT PEER SUPPORT PROJECT



### Tips:

- As a parent you have the right to appear in Court and are eligible for legal representation in your Court case.
- Get legal advice as early as possible.
- You can call Legal Aid on 1300 888 529 for free legal advice
- Legal Aid or the Law Society of NSW can give you names of lawyers experienced in children's court matters.
- Court process can be overwhelming and confusing, including the language. You can ask your lawyer to explain what is going on.
- Ask your lawyer to explain what you should expect in the Courtroom and who will be there.
- If you are worried about your safety and /or if you have experienced violence from your partner and you think they will be in the Court tell your lawyer.
- Be prepared when the Department tell their side of the story. They may say things about you in Court that you believe are not true or that cause you to feel angry, humiliated or ashamed.
- You can tell your side of the story in your 'affidavit' to the court which your lawyer will help you write.
- You do not have to agree with your lawyer's advice when they give you legal options
- It is a good idea to someone with you to court for emotional support

"Court was the worst, the anxiety and everything you get before you walk into that court house is horrible. You don't know who is going to be there to judge you. They're only going on what's written there in black and white to them, they don't know who I am or who I was as a mother, it's only what they have been told. It was horrible".

"I never knew what was going to happen, or why I had to go in so often. At first nothing seemed to change"

"I've never been in a court case before or a court system ever. And all these legal people in there. You feel awkward and very uncomfortable."



Communities & Justice

The Department of Communities and Justice has information on their website  
<https://www.facs.nsw.gov.au/families/legal/care-and-protection-proceedings/stages>



The Family Inclusion Strategies in the Hunter website is developed for parents – find out more information and about events for parents with other parents  
<http://www.finclusionh.org>

Legal Aid  
NEW SOUTH WALES

Legal Aid has a great website with lots of useful information:  
<https://www.legalaid.nsw.gov.au/publications/factsheets-and-resources/kids-in-care>



LAW AND JUSTICE  
FOUNDATION  
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