

RESTORATION ASSESSMENT

A Resource for Parents written by Family Inclusion Strategies Hunter Peer Parent Expert

Information About Restoration Assessments

This is some information about the restoration assessment process. Restoration assessments are an important step when there is a possibility of your child returning to your care. These assessments help DCJ understand what support might be needed to make restoration safe and successful.

We understand that this process can feel overwhelming, and we want to ensure you have the information you need to feel as prepared and supported as possible.

What is a Restoration Assessment?

A restoration assessment is a process where information is gathered about your current situation, strengths, and any support needs. The assessment helps DCJ to consider whether your child can safely return to your care, what supports may be helpful, and what any next steps might be.

It is not about judging you as a person, it is about working together to understand what is needed for the best outcomes for your child.

What the Assessment May Look at for you:

- Your current living situation (including safety, stability, and space for your child).
- House checks for safety, rental inspection reports, rental ledger, first aid kit, sleeping arrangements, cupboards/freezer stocked (week or two supply of food). Yard safety, hazards, fire blanket.
- Your support networks (such as family, friends, and services around you).

- Your understanding of your child's needs and how you plan to meet them.
- How you have addressed any concerns raised in the past (such as domestic violence, mental health, substance use, or other issues if they were part of the reason for removal).
- Your ongoing engagement with supports (including any courses, programs, or counselling you have done or are doing).
- How you manage stress, parenting challenges, and day-to-day care of children.
- Attending a family time to observe your interactions with your children.

Children will be assessed as well e.g. wants, fears. Carer will have a say in assessment.

Things You Can Do to Prepare:

- Be open and honest during discussions, this is not about being perfect but about showing your willingness and ability to meet your child's needs.
- Take time to reflect on any changes you have made or are working on.
- Write down any questions you may have about the process or what is expected of you.
- Consider anything from your past that could be brought up and how you will respond to this. (Note; the past could go back to your childhood experiences, parents parenting, anytime you have been a victim or perpetrator, different life experiences including juvenile records). These can be tough conversations so it's important you prepare your responses and prepare yourself emotionally.
- Bring information about any supports you are engaged with (for example, letters from services, certificates from courses, or support people who can speak to your progress). At least 3 support networks including people you could immediately call if you needed help.
- Have a relapse prevention plan to share (e.g. for AOD, mental health, DV etc.) including a safety plan if relapse occurs
- Think about barriers that make it hard for you to attend appointments or meetings (such as transport, childcare, or other commitments) It's ok to ask for what you will

need support with, in the beginning.

- Consider your children's trauma and how you will best support them with it, e.g. trauma informed counselling, courses, podcasts, books.
- How will you support the relationship of the child/children and other significant family members? This will include carers.
- Routines - are you prepared for your child's medical needs (paediatricians, doctors, counselling etc)
- School what school they will go to, if it is a change in school how will you prepare them, how will they get there and home
- Your ideas on time frame of restoration process (make sure your child focused and realistic)
- Self – care plan, what does that look like for you

Please Remember:

- The assessment is not about finding faults, it is about understanding your journey, your strengths, and what support is needed to give restoration the best chance of success.
- It is perfectly ok to ask for a break at any time. This is particularly important if you are caught off guard or unsure of best response. Practice the pause.
- Questions around your children and 'what if's.' (started using, identified as transgender etc.) can be confronting, practice responses beforehand e.g. That's a great question, can we explore together, I would utilise and expand my support services, In the past I might have handled that differently, but I've learned.
- Many parents feel nervous or unsure about what to say, that is completely normal. Take your time and ask for clarification if anything is unclear.
- You are allowed to have a support person with you if that would help you feel more comfortable.
- Self- care before and after this assessment is a must!!

If you have any questions or would like to talk through the process before the assessment begins, please contact your caseworker and your lawyer and ask.

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