

Children's Contact Service Information Sheet



The Children's Contact Service provides:

- assisted changeover of children between separated parents, and
- supervised contact visits of children with the parent that they do not live with
- in a safe, neutral child-focused service and venue
- in circumstances where family members cannot manage arrangements themselves

The CCS provides support within a 6-month time-frame to assist parents to move actively towards managing children's contact arrangements between themselves. The CCS supports parents in achieving this by jointly planning what needs to change, and the steps needed to achieve this.

Parents are required to attend a 3-hour "Building Connections" seminar offered in partnership with the Geelong Family Relationship Centre. Parents may also be referred to other support services and post-separation parenting programs within Bethany and the wider Geelong region.

The CCS provides services to parents on a voluntary basis even though parents may or may not have Family Law Court Orders, Family Violence or Intervention Orders or a Parenting Plan requiring parents to use the CCS services. The CCS is not legally bound to provide service but will attempt to provide service according to court orders.

The times when the CCS can provide supervised contacts and changeovers are:

Fridays 10.30 – 6.00pm Saturdays 9.30am – 5.00pm Sundays 1.00pm – 5.30pm.

Supervised contact visits are generally offered for up to **2 hours once a fortnight**.

There are fees charged for the services, based on income levels (see following page).

The CCS strives to ensure that all contact between children and their parents is conducted in the children's best interests and provides a safe, positive experience for children who attend the service.

How to apply

1. The CCS requires that both parents submit CCS application forms and attach copies of any court orders or parenting plans. The application from the first parent to apply will be acknowledged.
2. An application form will be posted to the second parent, and they have up to 4 weeks to return the form to Bethany.
3. Once both applications have been received parents will be invited to attend separate assessment interviews with the Team Leader or a CCS staff member.
4. The CCS will offer a service only after an assessment with both parents has occurred and it has been determined that the service has the capacity to provide a safe service that is in the best interests of the children.

If you have any questions please call Bethany Community Support on **5278 8122**

Children's Contact Service Fees

The Children's Contact Service is funded by the Federal Department of Social Services but this does not fully cover the cost of services provided. In line with Bethany policy, the fees will be based on income and ability to pay. Fees may be waived in circumstances of hardship following discussion with the Team Leader. Please note that fees may change without notice at the discretion of Bethany.

Fees will be shared between both parents unless otherwise stated in your Court Orders or agreed to by both parents that one parent is to pay. Where income levels differ between the two parents, each parent pays half of the rate applicable to their income level.

Fee Payment Arrangements:

- Parents are required to pay fees on the day of contact or changeover or in advance.
- Payment can be in cash or by cheque. EFTPOS is not available. A receipt will be issued.
- Outstanding fees will need to be settled prior to the next scheduled contact or changeover.
- If fees are not paid over a period of time, on-going access to the Children's Contact Service will be reviewed.

Assisted Changeover

Parental Income	Fee Charged for each Changeover/Handover
Health Care Card Recipients	\$2.00
Non Health Care Card Recipients	\$5.00

Supervised Contact Visit

Parental Income	Fee Charged for each Facilitated/Supervised Visit
Health Care Card Recipients	\$10.00
\$25,000 - \$30,000	\$20.00
\$30,000 - \$40,000	\$30.00
\$40,000 - \$50,000	\$40.00
\$50,000 - \$70,000	\$50.00
\$70,000 +	\$70.00