

WHAT DOES IT COST?

If you have a grant of legal assistance, a contribution towards your legal costs is always required. The amount you have to pay depends on your financial situation.

If you own real estate and your legal costs (including costs for a family conference) exceed \$2,250, the Legal Services Commission will register a statutory charge over the property. This means that when the property is sold or refinanced you will be required to repay to the Commission the amount of your legal costs.

If you do not have legal aid, you will have to pay your lawyer's fees to attend the conference.



 **Legal Help Line 1300 366 424**
Child Support Advice 8111 5576

Adelaide
159 Gawler Place
Adelaide 5000
Telephone 8111 5555

Elizabeth
Windsor Building
Elizabeth Centre
Elizabeth 5112
Telephone 8111 5400

Mt Barker
18 Walker Street
Mt Barker 5251
Telephone 8111 5320

Noarlunga
Noarlunga House
Noarlunga Centre 5168
Telephone 8111 5340

Port Adelaide
ANL House
306 St Vincent Street
Port Adelaide 5015
Telephone 8111 5460

Port Augusta
13 Flinders Terrace
Port Augusta SA 5700
Telephone 8686 2200

Whyalla
7/169 Nicolson Ave
Whyalla Norrie 5608
Telephone 8620 8500

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For detailed information about the law see:
www.lsc.sa.gov.au

FAMILY LAW CONFERENCING



WHAT IS FAMILY LAW CONFERENCING?

The Family Law Act requires that, in most cases, before you make an application to the court for a parenting order, you must attend family dispute resolution. The Commission provides one type of family dispute resolution where the parties may be legally assisted. It can help you to resolve your dispute without going to court.

WHOCANATTENDA CONFERENCE?

Conferencing is arranged by the Legal Services Commission. To be eligible for conferencing, at least one person involved in the dispute must have a current grant of legal assistance.

DO I NEED A LAWYER?

If you are granted legal assistance to attend a conference, your lawyer will attend the conference with you and their legal costs will be met by the Commission as part of your grant of aid. It is not a requirement that the other party be represented by a lawyer however we recommend that they at least obtain legal advice before they attend the conference.

WHY SHOULD I ATTEND A CONFERENCE?

Conferences are a good way of settling your dispute without the stress and anxiety of going to court. It is an opportunity for you to have your say and to consider solutions that everyone can agree on.

It can be very expensive if your dispute has to go to court. Conferencing can often end your dispute more quickly and with less cost than court proceedings.



WHO ATTENDS A CONFERENCE?

You and the other person will take part in the conference, together with your lawyers.

If the court has appointed a lawyer to represent the best interests of your child, this independent children's lawyer will also be present at the conference.

The conference is conducted by a chairperson who is an independent person trained in conferencing and family law.

TYPES OF CONFERENCES

Conferences can be held prior to any litigation being commenced in a family law court. In some cases where litigation has already commenced, the court may order the parties to the dispute to attend a conference at the Commission if the Commission determines it is appropriate.

WHAT HAPPENS AT A CONFERENCE?

The chairperson helps you and the other party to state your concerns and to develop options to resolve the dispute which are relevant and practical to your particular situation. You can ask your lawyer for advice at any stage.

In all conferences you and the other person are in separate rooms. In most conferences the chairperson will move between you (this is called a 'shuttle conference').

Conferences by telephone may also take place in cases where the parties are located interstate or in regional areas.

In appropriate cases the chairperson may issue a certificate for the purposes of the Family Law Act concerning your attendance at the conference.

SAFETY CONCERNS

The Commission provides secure rooms where the conference is conducted. Any concerns that you may have about your safety when attending a conference should be raised with your lawyer, the Commission and the chairperson of the conference on the day.

HOW DO I ASK FOR A CONFERENCE?

The first step is for you to apply for a grant of legal assistance aid for a conference. To find out how to do this telephone the Legal Help Line 1300 366 424.

If you have already been granted legal aid to go to court you may still request a conference if you think that it may help you to resolve your dispute.

Discuss conferencing with your lawyer. If the Legal Services Commission thinks that a conference might be helpful, you may be required to take part in a conference.

However, a conference may not be held if there is a background of family violence, intimidation, child abuse, mental illness or other matters of concern. Please make sure that you or your lawyer informs the Commission if any of these issues are relevant to your matter.