

What is the Children's Contact Service?

We offer short term services that help and support families who are experiencing conflict following separation and finding it difficult to co-parent. We provide services for children aged between 6 weeks and 12 years in a safe and neutral environment.

We work together with families to help them enjoy positive experiences with their children. We assist them to work towards co-parenting and managing their own contact arrangements. This is done by moving through progressively more independent service streams.

What services do we offer?

We provide Supervised Contact, Supported Contact, Changeover and Supported Changeover services. The services are designed to be progressive in nature, so suitable families will move through the different service streams on their way to self managing their own contact arrangements.

When using our service, we may recommend other suitable services to help parents develop a supportive bridge so their children can feel safe and secure when moving from one parent to the other.

Where are your centres located?

We have centres in the Illawarra, Macarthur and Shoalhaven areas. They are all accessible for public transport.

Who can use the service?

While families with court orders are usually given preference, safety comes first. Both parents will need to agree to our service rules and we will need to be sure that the children, staff and parents will all be safe when using our service.

How can I apply?

You will need to telephone our office to speak with the intake officer and register your interest. See our website for the best phone number to call.

Is there a waiting period?

Increasing need for services like ours means access depends upon availability. As a result, waiting times can vary at each of our sites. Parents should be aware that the service considers what is **best for the children** when scheduling visits.



What is Supervised Contact?

These visits can take place indoors at one of our family-friendly venues or at a child-friendly place near our centre. Children are able to spend time with their parents and other important people in a supervised setting. There will be a worker with the family during the whole visit.

What is Supported Contact? NEW As of 1 July 2014

This is the next step towards self management after Supervised Contact. Visits can take place indoors at one of our family-friendly venues. One or more families will be using the service at the same time. Children are able to spend time with their parents and other important people in a supported setting. There will be a worker monitoring the visits and available to provide support as needed.

Suitability for use of this service is assessed by staff with consideration to any court orders or children's needs.

What are the potential benefits of Supported Contact?

For the Service:

- Reduction in waiting lists as there will be increased capacity to service more families.

For the Children:

- The children can continue to have visits with their parents and other important people after separation while minimising any conflict between parents.

For your family:

- This service provides a step towards self managing your own contact arrangements.

What is Changeover?

You can apply directly for this service, or it might be the next step towards self management after Supported Contact. Parents can drop off and collect their children in a relaxed environment. Each parent will have a different arrival and departure time, as well as a separate entry point to minimise the potential for conflict

What is Supported Changeover? NEW As of 1 July 2014

This is the next step towards self management after Changeover. Parents can drop off and collect their children in a relaxed environment. The parent who has the child with them will be required to attend 15 minutes before the allocated time. The other parent will then come at the allocated time and the changeover happens in our waiting room in front of staff. Each parent uses the same entry point. There will be a worker monitoring the changeover and providing support as needed.



The parents will be responsible to facilitate and manage the changeover, using respectful child focused interaction between each other.

Suitability for use of this service is assessed by CCS staff with consideration to any court orders or children' needs.

What are the potential benefits of Supported Changeover?

For the Service:

- Supports families to move to self managing their own contact arrangements.

For the Children:

- Building confidence that their parent can get along without fighting and reducing feelings of fear and confusion.

For your family:

- Parents can rebuild confidence that they can interact with the other parent without conflict.
- Can get support from staff on the way to self managing your own contact arrangements.

How do we assess families as being suitable to transition to either of these services?

The team conducts monthly reviews of families using the service. Team members are trained in the needs and requirements of working in a children contact service. Assessment of suitability to progress is conducted in a peer review format where the team looks at how the children and parents are coping with using our services. The reviews are based on observations made during visits and any interactions with staff.

Aim of the services we offer

The service tries to help families work towards self managing their contact arrangements. We found that with only Supervised Contact and Changeover services available, the transition was too great for many families, and we needed services that offered more progressive steps. As of 1 July 2014 we will be providing our new Supported Contact and Supported Changeover services.

Families applying for Supervised Contact or Changeover need to be assessed for eligibility prior to being offered a service. All eligible families will be reviewed (see above for more details on review process) for suitability to transition from Supervised Contact to Supported Contact, and Changeover to Supported Changeover.

If applying directly for either the Supported Contact or Supported Changeover services, families will still be required to attend the previous service level first. For example, if you apply for Supported Contact you will be required to attend Supervised Contact visits before you can be assessed for suitability to transition to a Supported Contact visits.



Assessment for suitability for any of our services will take into account any identified issues either by staff or the courts. Suitable families will also be expected to move through service streams towards self management.

Staff will always be present to monitor and provide support as needed during use of all our services.

Visit times

Although parents or courts might want particular times or days, families should not expect that the service will be able to meet requests exactly. We will try to meet **the children's needs** as closely as possible but will need to take into account the operational needs of the service first.

See our website for up to date opening hours.

Waiting Times

Although we aim to keep our waiting times to a minimum, due to limited funding and increasing need for services, waiting times can't be helped.

See our website for up to date waiting times for services.

Court Orders and the CCS

Please be aware that court orders instruct the family not the service. CCS will try and work together with families and courts to achieve what is **best for the children**. We are only a short term service option and cannot facilitate families with ongoing need for our services.

Any interim court orders should be written in a way that allows the service:

- The assess families suitability for one of our services.
- To schedule visit frequencies and times that are able to be accommodated by the service, taking into account service constraints and needs of the children.
- Consider and include the use of progressive services as above i.e. Supervised Contact, Supported Contact, Changeover, Supported Changeover (where appropriate).
- Include clients' participation in any referrals made by the service e.g. post separation cooperative parenting programs, parenting skills training, anger management, etc.

Need more info?

See our website:

www.catholiccare.dow.org.au

Email with a specific query:

CCCSinfo@catholiccare.dow.org.au

General telephone enquiries:

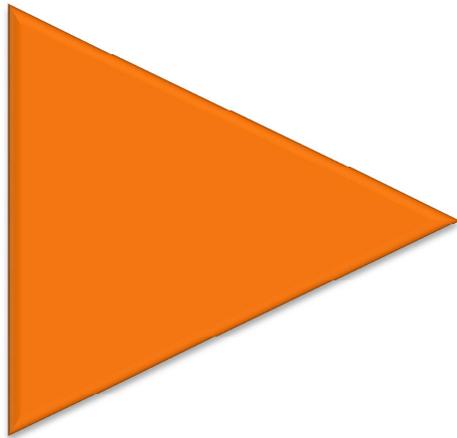
Wollongong, Nowra 02 4227 1122

Campbelltown 02 4628 0044

To register an application:

Intake 02 4254 9316



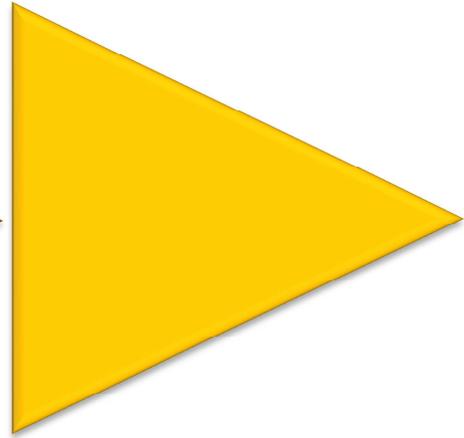


Supervised Contact

Visits take place at one of our family-friendly venues or a child-friendly place near our centre.

Children are able to spend time with parents and other important people in a supervised setting.

A worker will be with the family during the whole visit.



Supported Contact

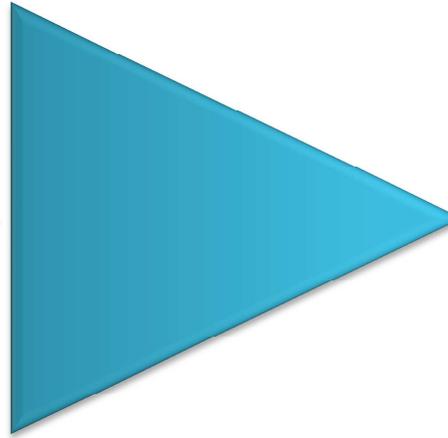
The next step towards self management after Supervised Contact. Visits take place at one of our family-friendly venues.

One or more families will be using the service at the same time.

Children are able to spend time with parents and other important people in a supported setting.

A worker will be monitoring the visits and available to provide support as needed.

Suitability for this service is assessed by staff with consideration to any court orders or children' needs.

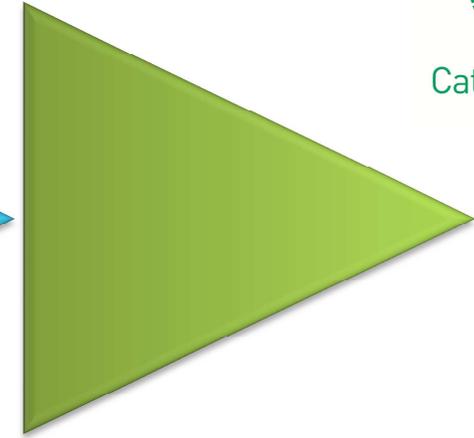


Changeover

You can apply directly for this service, or it might be the next step towards self management after Supported Contact.

Parents drop off and collect their children in a relaxed environment.

Each parent has a different arrival and departure time, as well as separate entry points to minimise the potential for conflict.



Supported Changeover

The next step towards self management after Changeover.

Parents drop off and collect their children in a relaxed environment. The parent who has the child with them will be required to attend first. The other parent will then come 15 minutes later. The changeover happens inside our building in front of a worker.

Each parent uses the same entry point. A worker will monitor the changeover and provide support as needed.

Parents will be responsible for managing the changeover, using respectful child focused interactions.

Suitability for this service is assessed by staff with consideration to any court orders or children' needs.

