

Contact - Information Sheet

Children in the care of the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the Department of Communities (the Department) usually have contact with their parents, siblings, extended family, close friends and sometimes previous carers. This allows children to maintain

belonging.

Face-to-face visits are most common, but other forms of contact include phone calls, email, letters, skype and text messaging.

For children who

is critical. In the case of Aboriginal children, people who are regarded as significant in the

The benefits of contact

Contact can have many benefits for the child, their parents and the rest of their family.

development, build and maintain their positive relationships and to meet their best interests. Well planned contact can:

- maintain and strengthen parent/child relationships;
- preserve important family and cultural connections;
- ease the pain of separation for both the child and their family;
- reassure the child of their parents wellbeing and help them adjust to being in care;
- keep parents up-to- development and interests;
- maintain and enhance sibling relationships, particularly where siblings are not living together;
- allow parents to engage in everyday activities with their child such as feeding, toileting, combing hair etc; and
- provide opportunity for parents to work on areas of parenting that may need development.

Developing contact arrangements

eam will be invited to participate in *Signs of Safety* meetings to discuss the plans for contact. It is important that everyone works together so that the needs of the child and their safety remains the focus.

[Contact]

Contact arrangements will be recorded in the *Signs of Safety Assessment and Case Planning Form*

[Contact]

Contact may also be suspended or cancelled where risks are considered significant or where it is not believed to

may be compromised by contact, a meeting will be held to provide clear information to relevant parties about the reasons why contact is being suspended or cancelled and to consider ways of overcoming these difficulties.

Review of contact decisions

If you are unhappy with a contact decision, you should speak to your child protection worker. Alternatively you can ask to speak to the Team Leader or the District Director at your local district office to ask them to review the decision. If the issue cannot be resolved at your local district office, Complaints Management Unit. website.

If the contact arrangements have been made as part of a Care Plan meeting, you can ask for the decision to be reviewed by the Care Plan Review Panel. A Care Plan Review Brochure is available from your local district office.

Useful Contacts