# Kids Talk: Hearing from you

# Information for children

Your parents or carers have been talking to make decisions about your care. They want to know more about what you think. They may have agreed for you to talk to a professional about how things are going. This professional is called a child consultant. We call this ‘Kids Talk’.

## How Kids Talk works

If Kids Talk is organised, you will meet with a child consultant. By talking to you, the child consultant can get an idea about:

* what life is like for you
* what is going well
* what might not be going so well for you.

You might have something specific you would like your parents to know.

The child consultant will talk to your parents or carers about all of these things. Your parents and carers use this information when they make decisions about you**.**

If you are feeling unhappy, confused, worried or sad, you can let the child consultant know. You might draw, play fun games, or just chat about family, friends and school.

## How Kids Talk can help

Your opinion is important. Sometimes it can be hard to talk to your parents about your family. Talking to a child consultant is a way for you to have a say. It can help to talk to someone about your feelings. It can also help your parents make decisions.

## How we try to make Kids Talk easier for you

Nobody will make you do Kids Talk if you don’t want to. The child consultant works with lots of families and will do their best to make it easier for you. You might feel worried about what to say, or not be sure what you think. This is ok.

You will be asked some questions at the end of the meeting about your feelings and about Kids Talk. You don’t have to answer. Any information you give us can help us improve what we do.

## Who else can help

If the child consultant is worried you are not safe or someone is hurting you, they will need to speak to someone about that. They can also help get someone you can talk to more, if you found talking to the child consultant useful.

## About our Family Dispute Resolution Service

## Victoria Legal Aid has a mediation service, called Family Dispute Resolution Service (FDRS). We help families going through separation.

## We welcome all families, including rainbow families and caregivers of different generations and relationships. We know that each family is unique, and we believe each family matters. We understand that separation is very difficult for everyone in a family, and that you may feel uncomfortable talking about it.

## We try to make sure our service meets the needs of all families, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families.

## At a mediation, a trained mediator helps parents or carers talk about family arrangements, to see if they can agree on a plan together.

Kids Talk is used in mediation to help children have a say. If you go to Kids Talk, your parents or carers and the mediator can talk about what’s important for you and use this to help make decisions.

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## More information

If you would like more information about Kids Talk, or to tell us how it went for you, ask your parents how to get in touch with us.

(please don’t include usual corporate text boxes or contact details here as regional office locations etc not relevant for our service)

Contact the Manager, Kids Talk

(03) 9269 0500

email fdrs@vla.vic.gov.au

Contact the **Kids Helpline** on **1800 55 1800** or visitwww.kidshelpline.com.au (for free 24/7 telephone and online counselling for young people)