

Family-led decision making: your personal information

The family-led decision making program is committed to safeguarding the privacy of your personal information. We collect and handle personal and health information that you provide to us in the context of laws that safeguard your personal information.

What laws protect my personal information?

The *Children, Youth and Families Act 2005*, the *Information Privacy Act 2000*, and the *Health Records Act 2001* govern the privacy of information held by child protection.

The Children, Youth and Families Act (the Act) has special sections which set out how your information can be used and shared. Where there are no special sections in the Act relating to a specific situation, information sharing occurs in the context of the Information Privacy Principles in the Information Privacy Act and the Health Privacy Principles in the Health Records Act.

What information is collected and how is it used in the family-led decision making process?

Preparation for a meeting

Family-led decision making is a decision making process in which family members, including extended family, friends and community supports are brought together with child protection and other professionals to make plans for the safety and wellbeing of children involved with child protection.

While preparing for the meeting, the convenor(s) will receive information from people invited to attend the meeting for the purposes of the meeting, including information relating to:

- your relationship or role with the child
- your understanding of the concerns for the child
- your relationship with other family members or people involved in the child's life
- circumstances relevant to the safety and wellbeing of the child.

This information is important so the convenor(s) can thoroughly plan the meeting, invite relevant participants and ensure that everyone is aware of why the meeting is being held. If you are concerned about sharing information with other participants, it is important for you to discuss these concerns with the convenor before the meeting.

During a family-led decision making meeting

Sharing information relevant to the child's safety and wellbeing is vital to the family-led decision making meeting process. It allows all participants to be aware of the circumstances that have led to child protection's involvement and to have the information they will need to plan for the child's safety, development and wellbeing.

At the start of the meeting the convenor(s) will discuss information sharing and what can and cannot be discussed with people outside the meeting.

Who can child protection share personal information with?

The law allows child protection to collect and share information without your knowledge or consent in specific circumstances. This includes when someone's safety or welfare is at risk.

A broader range of information may be shared with your permission with other people or organisations that can help children and families.

Information may be given to:

- Victoria Police, who also have a role in protecting children
- community service organisations including Child FIRST
- schools, health services, doctors and other health professionals.

How can I get access to my personal information?

If you want to see the information we have collected about you, talk to the meeting convenor. They may be able to show you or talk to you about it unless this is prevented by the law. You can also apply under the *Freedom of Information Act 1982* to access your information and to have it changed if it is incorrect. You should speak to the child protection worker for assistance on how to apply, or ring the department's Freedom of Information unit on (03) 9096 8449.

Further information

If you want more information or have a complaint about the collection and use of your personal information by child protection you can talk to the child protection worker or their supervisor. If you still have a complaint you can contact:

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| • DHHS complaints reception | phone: 1300 884 706 |
| • Victorian Privacy Commissioner | phone: 8619 8719 or free call: 1300 666 444 |
| • Health Services Commissioner | phone: 8601 5222 or free call: 1800 136 066 |

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