

What happens at a Family Dispute Resolution conference?

You will have an opportunity to express your point of view and hear what the other party wants to say.

The FDR Practitioner who chairs the conference is independent. Their role is to guide and support both of you, it is important to remember that they will not make a decision for you.

FDR conferences can take place with everyone in the same room, in separate rooms (called a 'shuttle' conference) or by telephone/ video conference.



To take part in a FDR conference, either you or the other party must have applied for and been granted legal aid for your family law problem.

A grant of legal aid provides a lawyer to represent you at the conference. If the other party has a grant of legal aid and you have been invited to attend the FDR conference, you can apply for legal aid yourself (either through Tasmania Legal Aid or a private lawyer), engage a private lawyer or attend without a lawyer.

If you apply for legal aid to go to court, you may be required to attend a FDR conference first.



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158 Liverpool Street



Launceston
64 Cameron Street



Devonport
8 Griffith Street



Burnie
50 Alexander St

Family Dispute Resolution Service



1300 366 611

Find us online



www.legalaid.tas.gov.au

Tasmania Legal Aid acknowledges and pays respect to the palawa (Tasmanian Aboriginal people) as the traditional and original owners, and continuing custodians of the land and waters of this island, Lutruwita (Tasmania), where we live and work.

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What is Family Dispute Resolution?

Family Dispute Resolution (FDR) is a way of resolving your family law problems without going to court.

At Tasmania Legal Aid we use a 'co-operative' mediation model, which means your lawyer can attend as well.

An FDR conference is chaired by an FDR Practitioner who is an independent, accredited professional specially trained to help people try to resolve their problems.

The FDR Practitioner will not take anyone's side, but rather helps all people involved to say what they need to say, to listen to everyone else, and help everyone feel safe while working on their family law problems.

You can try FDR at any stage of your separation, even if you have already commenced court proceedings. Sometimes the judge may recommend that people go for FDR.

When you reach an agreement

Your agreement can be recorded as either a Parenting Plan or Consent Orders.

A parenting plan must be in writing, signed and dated by both parties.

If you want your agreement to be legally binding, you or your lawyer can apply to the court to have your agreement made into Consent Orders.

A Parenting Plan or Consent Orders can include details on how they can be changed and how you will work out disagreements in the future.

If Family Dispute Resolution is unsuccessful?

If you have tried FDR and couldn't reach an agreement, the FDR Practitioner will write you a certificate to say that you attempted FDR. You then may need to apply to court to resolve your family law problems.

The advantages of Family Dispute Resolution

- You make your own decisions
- FDR is also usually:
 - quicker than going to court
 - cheaper than going to court
 - less stressful



When FDR is not the best option

FDR is not the best solution for everyone and every situation.

For example, if there is a Family Violence Order in place, it may not be safe for everyone to do FDR.

Also, FDR won't work unless each person involved agrees to participate in the process.

Call Tasmania Legal Aid on 1300 366 611 to discuss whether FDR is suitable for your situation.

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