

Family Dispute Resolution (FDR)

Anyone can talk to a lawyer for free at Tasmania Legal Aid.

To get free legal information call 1300 366 611, drop into our Hobart or Launceston office (no appointment necessary) or use the Legal Talk chat function on our website. We are open Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm.

A lawyer can listen to your story and help identify the next steps you can take.

Family Dispute Resolution is a way of trying to fix family law problems through mediation instead of going to court. Mediation is when people try to solve a problem or disagreement with the help of an independent person.

Watch the video for an overview or read below for more information.

What is FDR?

FDR offers an opportunity for separated parties to come together to discuss and resolve family law issues about parenting, property, and financial matters. The process encourages parties to focus on finding solutions and compromises (when each party is prepared to give and take) so that disagreements, disputes and conflicts don't get worse and create ongoing harm.

It is actually a requirement of the *Family Law Act* that separated parents make a genuine effort to use FDR to resolve their parenting dispute before filing a court application (some exceptions apply).

FDR has a very high success rate and some of the benefits are that:

- parents feel empowered by making their own decisions
- parents are supported and heard through the process
- it is quicker and less stressful than a court process
- it helps preserve and improve family relationships.

How long does an FDR conference go for at TLA?

At TLA our conferences go for approximately 3 hours. We run conferences from our Hobart and Launceston offices. They are held between 9:00am-12:00pm, and 2:00pm-5:00pm, Monday to Friday.

Do I have to attend an FDR?

No-one cannot make you to attend a conference, but there is an obligation to attempt FDR in parenting disputes before making a court application. You should seek legal advice about this.

Who will be at the FDR conference?

The following people may attend an FDR conference:

Parties to the dispute

This is usually the parents of the child/ren, or any person who has a primary caring role such as a grandparent.

Lawyers

Each party attends the conference with their lawyer if they have one.

Chairperson

An FDR conference is chaired by an FDR Practitioner who is an accredited professional specially trained to help families resolve their dispute. An FDR Practitioner might also be known as a Mediator.

The FDR Practitioner will facilitate the discussion in the room. They will listen to everyone, help the parties say what they need to say, and will assist with options for resolution.

Importantly, the FDR Practitioner will ensure that everyone remains safe and supported throughout the conference. The FDR Practitioner will not take anyone's side and remains independent and impartial to the dispute. The FDR Practitioner is not a Judge and will not make decisions, and they cannot provide legal advice.

Child consultant

A child consultant will only attend a child inclusive conference.

Independent Children's Lawyer (ICL)

An ICL will only attend an ICL conference.

Support worker/person

In some circumstances, a party will have a support worker/person with them at a conference if agreed to by the Chair of the FDR conference and the other party.

[Did this answer your question?](#)

This is written for people who live in or who are affected by the laws of Tasmania, Australia. The law changes all the time – this information is not legal advice. If you have a legal problem, you should talk to a lawyer before making a decision about what to do.