

Reports made to Child Safety

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

To get free legal information call 1300 366 611, drop into an 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.

Child Safety work with reports and information given to the Strong Families Safe Kids.

A report has been made about a kid in my care, what does that mean?

It means that someone was worried about a kid and told Strong Families Safe Kids about why they were worried.

Why was a report made?

A report is made because someone is worried that a kid isn't safe. People may think that a kid is unsafe if one of the following is happening to a kid:

- They see family violence happening
- They are abused or neglected
- They are threatened by someone at home
- They are unsupervised or uncontrolled
- They are away from school
- There is a real risk of physical or psychological harm.

Who can make a report?

Anyone can make a report to Strong Families Safe Kids if they are worried that a kid might not be safe.

Some people need to make a report about a kid who they think is not safe. Teachers, doctors, nurses and most professionals must make a report if they think a kid is not safe.

Can I be told who made a report?

Child Safety will not tell you who made a report about your kid. That information is confidential.

What will happen now that a report has been made?

Child Safety will decide whether the information they have received is serious enough for them to want to know more. If they look into it further, they will usually talk with you, your family and other services that may know your kid.

Child Safety workers want to make sure that a kid is safe. If they don't think your kid is safe, they will want to understand more and may start

a legal process for an 'Assessment Order'. In extreme circumstances Child Safety may apply for a 'Care and Protection Order' at an early stage.

What is an 'Assessment Order'?

An Assessment Order is something that a court can give to Child Safety which gives Child Safety workers the right to do certain things. These things can include:

- Taking a kid away for a period of time where they will live in another house
- Asking questions of people who know the child. These questions need to be answered
- Having a child specialist examine your kid to understand them more
- Request a written report from a child specialist to help work out if your kid is safe.

If a court is going to think about making an Assessment Order you will be told so that you can be there at court.

Can I get into trouble if I don't do what the court says?

Yes. An Assessment Order will list things that you must or must not do. If you break any of these, you can get a big fine and even go to prison. It is very important that you understand what the Assessment Order means and that you follow it. You can ask a lawyer to help you understand an Assessment Order.

How long does an Assessment Order last for?

It can last for 4 weeks. It can also be made longer – for another 8 weeks if there is a good reason, for example to give time for a Family Group Conference. A court needs to decide whether it is made longer.

In total, an Assessment Order can be as long as 12 weeks.

What happens after an Assessment Order is over?

Child Safety may decide that your kid is safe and that nothing else needs to happen.

If Child Safety decide that your kid isn't safe and needs some protection they may go to court to:

- Organise a family group conference
- Ask for a Care and Protection Order

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.