



Easy Read guide

NSW Department of
Communities and Justice

Bringing your child home



How to use this guide



The NSW Government Department of Communities and Justice wrote this guide.

When you see the word 'we', it means the NSW Government Department of Communities and Justice.



We wrote this guide in an easy to read way.

We use pictures to explain some ideas.

Bold
Not bold

We wrote some important words in **bold**.

This means the letters are thicker and darker.



We explain what these words mean.

There is a list of these words on page 31.



This Easy Read guide is a summary of a booklet.

This means it only includes the most important ideas.



You can find the booklet on our website.

www.dcj.nsw.gov.au/children-and-families/nsw-child-protection-guide-for-families/restoration--bringing-your-child-home.html



You can ask for help to read this guide.

A friend, family member or support person might be able to help you.



This guide includes photos of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

It might contain photos of people who have passed away.



We recognise Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the traditional owners of the land we live on – Australia.

They were the first people to live on and use the:

- land
- waters.



This guide is quite long.

It includes a lot of information.



You don't need to read it all at once.

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What is this guide about?



We deliver **child protection services**.



This means we work with families and communities to make sure children are safe.

We can decide if a child is not safe in their home.

We always aim to:



- keep your child safely at home with you



- treat families and communities with respect



- work with you and your community to build skills and knowledge.

We also aim to:



- be honest



- listen to your ideas and respond when you ask for help



- connect you to supports.



This guide is about bringing your child home from out of home care.



Out of home care is when your child lives somewhere else.

We explain:



- how we decide if your child can come home



- what happens when your child returns home.

How do we decide if your child can come home?



Our goal is to return your child home to you when it's safe.

We call this 'restoration'.



For this to happen, your **caseworker** needs to see you change things about your home or life to make it safe for your child.

Our caseworkers can support you to:



- care for your child



- live safely.



What you need to change will be part of the plan we create with you.

We call it the 'Family Action Plan for Change'.

In this guide, we call it the Plan for Change.

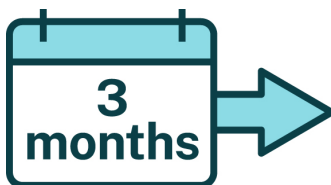
The Plan for Change includes:



- what you need to change in your home to make it safe



- goals you need to reach.



You need to work on your Plan for Change for at least 3 months.



Then a caseworker will check your home.

We call this check a 'restoration assessment'.

What do caseworkers check?



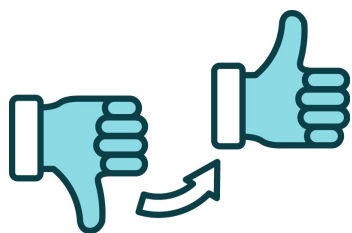
Your caseworker will check certain things to see if your child can come home.

They will think about these things the whole time they're working with you.



They'll check that you're trying hard to change your home to make it safe.

They'll check if things are changing:



- for the better



- in a way that will last a long time.



They'll think about the relationship between you and your child.



They'll check that you're getting support from services and people around you.



They will think about what your child says and feels.

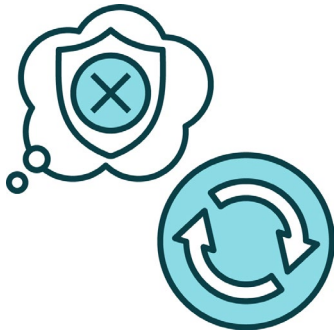
They'll check if you're trying hard to change your life through:



- mental health services



- drug or alcohol treatment.



Your caseworker will need to know that you understand:

- why your home wasn't safe for your child
- what you have to change.



They will also think about what happens when you and your child have visits.

And if you show that you're a safe parent during those times.

How can you manage your stress?



Working to get your child back can be stressful.



You might be trying to start a new life.

With new habits or new friends.



You might feel that you're not doing things fast enough.



Or that you keep making mistakes.



It's normal to feel this way.

Share how you feel with the people around you and keep trying.

Working through your Plan for Change

As you work through your Plan for Change, you'll:



- see your child



- work with caseworkers and other services



- manage your own life.



You'll have to go to the **Children's Court** and other meetings.



The Children's Court makes legal decisions about children.

They don't work for us.

This means they make their own decisions.



In this guide, we call it the Court.



Doing all these things can be hard.



It's important to keep thinking about your child.

And remember that you're doing it for them.



Talk to your caseworker if:

- you're having trouble meeting the goals in your Plan for Change
- you don't think you'll reach your goals before the end of the plan.



Your goals should never feel impossible.

Make sure they suit you and what your child needs to be safe.



As life gets easier, your child might be able to spend more time with you at home.



You'll need to spend time together so your child feels safe to return home to you.

What could your child be feeling?



Your child might be feeling lots of different things while they're away from you.

And when they come back home.



What they feel will depend on:

- their age
- what they've been through.

Your child might feel:



- sad about being away from you and the people they know



- connected to new people in their life, like their carer or their carer's children.

Your child also might feel:



- excited that their home is safe



- scared about Court or being taken away again



- angry if a sibling has come back to stay with you when they can't.



Your child might also feel like it's their fault they went into out of home care.



It's important to work with your caseworker and your child's carer to make returning home easier for your child.

How will the Court decide if your child can come home?



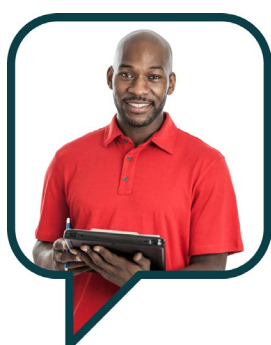
Your caseworker will tell the Court when they think your home is safe.



The Court will think about what your caseworker says.
They'll also think about what you say.
And where your child wants to live.



The Court might ask for someone else to check how safe your home is.
The person who does this won't work for us.
They'll be able to make their own decision.



If the Court agrees that your child can come home, they might say you still have to work with a caseworker.

We call this a 'supervision order'.

What happens when your child comes home?



It can be exciting for everyone when your child returns to a safe home.



But it can also be hard.

Your child has gone through a lot.



Many children like their carer's family and their new friends.

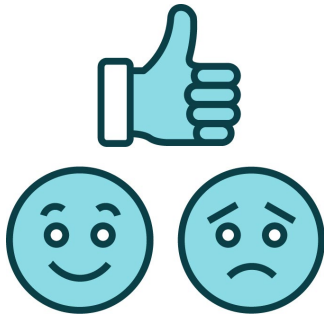
They might have also started new classes or activities that they like.



Your child might be worried about coming home because last time it wasn't safe.



Ask them what will make them feel safe and happy now.



Tell them it's okay to:

- have lots of different feelings
- miss things about living with their carer.



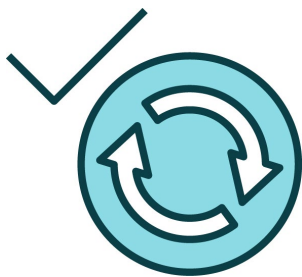
Your child might want to spend time with their carer's family and new friends.

They might want to keep doing the activities they started when they were in out of home care.



Try to help them do this.

Talk to your caseworker about getting some help if this costs too much time or money.



Remember that your child is coming back to a home that's different to the one they left.

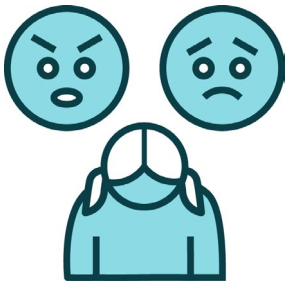
It's normal for them to behave differently.

Or test out the rules you set.



Big changes like this can affect your child's mental health.

Talk to your caseworker if you notice your child:



- is feeling angry or sad



- doesn't have any interest in doing things



- is using alcohol or drugs.



You can also call the Parent Line NSW.

1300 1300 52



You can also visit their website.

www.parentline.org.au



Once you and your child live together again, your caseworker will update the Court about how you're going.



They will do this by giving reports to the Court. This will happen for about 6 to 12 months.



You'll need to create a new Plan for Change with the caseworker after your child returns home.



It's important that you stick to the goals you make in this plan.

Legal services

Aboriginal Legal Service



**Aboriginal
Legal Service**
(NSW/ACT) Limited

You can contact the Aboriginal Legal Service for legal advice.



You can call them.

1800 733 233



You can visit their website.

www.alsnswact.org.au

Legal Aid NSW



You can contact Legal Aid NSW for legal advice.



You can call them.

1300 888 529



You can visit their website.

www.legalaid.nsw.gov.au

Women's Legal Service



You can contact the Women's Legal Service for legal advice.



You can call them.

1800 801 501



You can visit their website.

www.wlsnsw.org.au

Disability Advocacy NSW



You can contact Disability Advocacy NSW for support to speak up for yourself.



You can call them.

1300 365 085



You can visit their website.

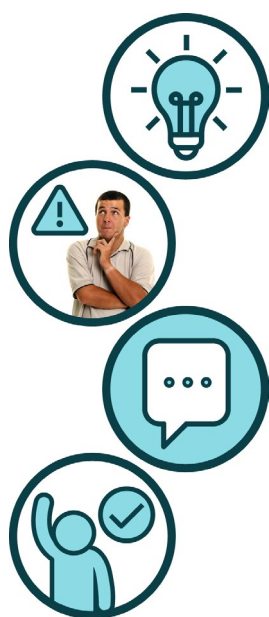
www.da.org.au

Intellectual Disability Rights Service



You can contact the Intellectual Disability Rights Service for support:

- to speak up for yourself
- if you have an **intellectual disability**.



An intellectual disability affects how you:

- learn new things
- solve problems
- communicate
- do things on your own.



You can call them.

02 9265 6300



You can visit their website.

www.idrs.org.au

Contact us

Asking for help can show that you:



- are a strong parent



- want your child to be safe.



If you want support, you can visit our website.

www.dcj.nsw.gov.au

Your caseworker



You can also contact your caseworker for information about how to get support.

You can write their contact details below.



Your caseworker's name:



Your caseworker's phone number:



Your caseworker's email address:

Your local Community Services Centre



You can contact your local Community Services Centre for information about how to get support.

You can write their phone number below.

Make a complaint about our services



When you make a **complaint**, you tell someone that something:

- has gone wrong
- isn't working well.



If you want to make a complaint about our services, you can contact the Enquiry, Feedback and Complaints Unit.



You can call them.

1800 000 164



You can also send them an email.

complaints@facs.nsw.gov.au

Word list

This list explains what the **bold** words in this guide mean.



Caseworkers

Our caseworkers can support you to:

- care for your child
- live safely.



Child protection services

Child protection services work with families and communities to make sure children are safe.

They can decide if a child is not safe in their home.



Children's Court

The Children's Court makes legal decisions about children.

They don't work for us.

This means they make their own decisions.



Complaint

When you make a complaint, you tell someone that something:

- has gone wrong
- isn't working well.



Intellectual disability

An intellectual disability affects how you:

- learn new things
- solve problems
- communicate
- do things on your own.



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