

INTRODUCTION TO PHOENIX RISING FOR CHILDREN



**PHOENIX
RISING**
FOR CHILDREN

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www.phoenixrising.org.au

Phoenix Rising For Children (PRFC) is an accredited organisation providing quality, family-based care and specialist support services to children and young people in out-of-home care, and contact supervision and transportation services to children, young people and their families in circumstances associated with Family Law.

As you would be aware, Australian law dictates that children/young people have the right of contact with their parents or significant other people as long as it does not affect their best interests.

PRFC recognises that contact visits, where court ordered or by agreement, are an opportunity for families to maintain ongoing relationships or develop new ones, by giving parents and significant others, with whom the children do not live, the opportunity to meet in a safe, relaxed and non-judgmental environment.

Please be aware that while PRFC seeks to assist, it is not our role to negotiate between the parties and we ask that the initial arrangements regarding the visitation/transportation be developed and agreed upon and then provided to PRFC. Any ongoing changes to those arrangements should be managed in the same way.

PROCEDURE FOR ORGANISING SUPERVISED CONTACT

1. PRFC is approached by a family or their legal representatives regarding supervision of supervised contact/transportation of the children/young people.
2. PRFC sends out an information pack including documentation that requires signing by the parties prior to being returned to PRFC. Completed documents plus the intake fee are sent to PRFC.
3. Costing for each session is discussed (quotation) and agreed upon.
4. Visitation/transportation details are discussed. This includes, but is not limited to, where the children/young people reside, where the parent(s) reside, where visits will take place – such as in a local, mutually agreed venue like a park, child-friendly activity centre, restaurant or other location – who may/may not attend the visit, any special medical/dietary/psychological needs of the children that must be observed, some family history, details about court orders, details about any restraints such as AVOs, and safety concerns involving the children and others.

5. Payment is made prior to a scheduled visitation/transportation, as per your Financial Agreement.
6. PRFC is notified of a payment by email/ or phone.
7. A qualified contact supervisor is arranged for the agreed date.
8. You receive confirmation of a scheduled visit.
9. Access visit/transportation takes place at the agreed time and place.
10. A quality and detailed contact/transportation report is provided within seven (7) working days.

PRFC SERVICE DELIVERY

Included in this information pack are four important documents for clients to read and/or sign:

1. Family Contact Service Agreement
2. Referral Form
3. Price list
4. Payment Instructions

Please also refer to the Contact Supervisor Role, Frequently Asked Questions, Supervised Contact Information and Resource Links and Checklist at the end of this document.

Family Contact Service Agreement

A Family Contact Service Agreement (The Agreement) needs to be filled out by each party (usually the person being supervised and the party with whom the child/ren reside) and returned as soon as possible to PRFC. The Agreement contains terms and conditions of service use, and ask for your personal information. The Agreement also asks for a brief explanation as to why contact supervision is required.

Referral Form

The Referral Form is completed by both parties, legal representatives and other relevant parties, and must contain information agreeable to ALL parties. All parties must sign the SAME Referral Form to confirm they have agreed to the information. Please understand it is not the role of PRFC to act as arbiter or to mediate between the parties. PRFC recognises there may be conflict and will seek to maintain a neutral position of goodwill.

While it is not the role or responsibility of PRFC to extract supervision requirements from court orders or to seek that the parties comply with court orders relevant to their circumstances, PRFC does seek information relevant to the parties and therefore requires a copy of the orders.

Court orders are required to provide PRFC with background and other information regarding the reasons for supervision. Please be aware that sometimes activities agreed between the parties and potentially reflected in court orders may be outside PRFC policy. For example, PRFC will not supervise activities such as ice skating and ocean swimming.

Venues

Phoenix Rising For Children's Family Contact Services use safe, neutral and child-focussed venues for supervised visits to occur between children and their parents.

Venues play an important role in the provision of this service. Whilst we are able to supervise visitation in the community, family homes and other natural settings, we need to ensure the venue is suitable for the purpose of supervision and supports the supervisor in providing a safe and controlled visit, maintaining the safety and well-being of children we are working with is our primary focus.

Venues can include:

- Libraries
- Parks
- Playgrounds
- Play centres
- Private residences (conditions apply)
- Entertainment venues
- Zoo's and wildlife parks
- Aquariums
- Movies
- Bowling
- Shopping centres
- Restaurants
- Art Galleries

Some venues are considered high risk or do not allow the supervisor to perform their role, these include but are not limited to:

- Beaches, open bodies of water
- Ice or roller skating, rollerblading, skateboarding
- Laser tag
- Trampolining
- Horse riding
- Bike riding (may be considered at bike riding venues with the appropriate safety equipment)
- Swimming Centres/ Pools(may be considered if all parties agree, however the supervisor will not enter the water)

When completing your referral form, please note, venues must be included, we do not accept 'to be advised' locations. If you have a list of agreed venues, please choose a default venue, which will allow us to schedule your request. This default venue may change to another agreed venue, however, we require 7 days-notice of such changes.

We recommend that you speak with our team if you are considering different venues, to ensure they are appropriate and meet our requirements. This is

especially important if you are currently in court and negotiating venues between yourself and the other party. It can be disappointing if you have agreed on a venue and our service is not able to facilitate contact at that location.

Please contact our Team for further information or if you have any questions regarding venues.

Price list

PRFC charges a minimum of three (3) hours per contact service as well as additional expenses such as mileage for transport, tolls, reports and other expenses etc. Travel/handover time must be taken into account when working out the overall length of the contact service. A three hour contact, for example, may be a combination of contact time and transport and handover time, depending on what you require. A quote can be provided upon request once we receive your Referral Form, however, the enclosed price list should provide an indication of the costs associated with each visit.

Premium quality and comprehensive written reports are provided to parties involved in the matter, we seek to provide these reports within seven (7) working days of the contact taking place. This time may be extended depending on the circumstances of the visit. Reports provide a timely account of the visit and include interactions between the child/young person and parents/other attendees. All reports are suitable for court filing.

PRFC always provides a report following service provision, and reports are a compulsory component of our service.

Payment Instructions

Payment for contact services is required before the service date and as per the Financial Agreement within the Service Agreement documentation. Please help us identify your payment by including a reference to the client/child's surname when making a payment, and please notify us of your payment once complete to ensure the visit proceeds.

Once the PRFC paperwork is completed and information received, we are able to check availability of our supervisors and advise if your requested dates and times are available.

CONTACT US

Phone: 02 9873 3992

Fax: 02 9875 2123

Web: www.phoenixrising.org.au

Office hours: Monday to Friday, 9am–5pm

After hours: In the case of an emergency or urgent issue, please telephone our office number for direction. Usually two mobile numbers will be provided. Please be aware these after-hours contacts are for urgent matters, and all other issues should be discussed with office personnel, during office hours.

CONTACT SUPERVISOR ROLE

The following information is a summary of the contact supervisor role when providing supervision to children, their parents and significant others.

- ✓ **MONITORING** conversations between the children, parents and others
- ✓ **POSITIONED** within a close distance to parents and children and constantly **OBSERVING** all interactions
- ✓ **ACCOMPANYING** parents and children everywhere, including to bathrooms and change rooms
- ✓ **AWARE** of what is appropriate behaviour for parents/attendees of contact supervisions
- ✓ **PROVIDING FEEDBACK** to the primary carer that is appropriate and relevant to the child's care and not encroaching on confidentiality of what transpired at the contact between parent and child
- ✓ **PROVIDING INFORMATION** to parents from primary carers relevant only to the child's care/needs
- ✓ **ENSURING SAFETY** of the child/ren at ALL times. The safety and wellbeing of children ultimately rests with the contact supervisor
- ✓ **ARRIVING ON TIME** to collect children when taking them to the visit and arriving at contact venues on time to meet with parents
- ✓ **ASSISTING** parents with the care of children when they are failing to respond to the child/ren's needs/safety
- ✓ **DIRECTING** primary carer and parent questions/requests to the relevant person/legal representative (where appropriate) or PRFC for advice
- ✓ **REPORTING** back to Phoenix Rising all relevant information about the contacts they are supervising in an honest and factual manner, verbally and in writing
- ✓ **SUPPORTING** parents and children to facilitate a positive interaction to ensure the child/young person's wellbeing

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Will my child/ren be safe?

Enclosed in the Supervisor Role document is detailed information about the steps taken by our qualified contact supervisors to ensure the safety, happiness and wellbeing of the child/young person at all times. Safety measures include: ready access by telephone to experienced support workers if problems or questions arise during contact; careful monitoring of conversation between the child and attendees; observing interactions and responding appropriately; accompanying children and parents at all times (including bathrooms); intervening immediately in the event of inappropriate/unsafe conduct; and terminating the contact visit and returning the children to their carer/parent if necessary.

Can I choose where visitation takes place?

Yes, by agreement between both parties. PRFC anticipates that the parties will propose the location of the contact visit, taking into account the particular needs of the children and the family. We understand the location/s may be subject to court orders, safety and OHS issues and negotiations between parents. PRFC can facilitate contact visits at private venues, parks, play centres and other community locations.

What can I expect from the Contact Report?

The supervisor will write a report following the visit/transportation which may be filed at court by the legal representatives of the parties. The report will give details of (a) who attended the visit, (b) what activities and interactions took place (c) what was talked about, and other information relevant to the wellbeing and welfare of the child. While supervisors seek to manage behaviours, any adverse events where your child showed distress, or other events such as where information was shared with your child that was inappropriate or hurtful (e.g. negatively mentioning another parent, discussing the issues to do with court or making/breaking unreasonable promises to the child/young person) will be recorded in the report.

Will my private information be disclosed to the other party?

PRFC management and staff ensure that the rights of children, young people and their families to privacy and confidentiality is respected and practised in all aspects of its daily operations. PRFC ensures confidentiality is maintained regarding private information such as home addresses, telephone numbers, and schools. PRFC ensures records are kept safe and in confidence at all times. When necessary, information is shared on a strict 'need to know' basis.

When can I start seeing my children unsupervised?

Each family situation is different and such decisions are usually made involving the parties, their lawyers, and the Family Court.

SUPERVISED CONTACT INFORMATION AND RESOURCE LINKS

Australian Children's Contact Service Association (ACCSA)

- Information regarding Australian Contact Services.
- Includes ACCSA Standards for Children's Contact Services and links to further information.

<http://accsa.org.au> (Home page)

<http://accsa.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2013/02/ACCSA-Standards.pdf> (Direct link to ACCSA Standards)

Aotearoa New Zealand Association of Supervised Contact Services

- Provides general information about Supervised Contact and Frequently Asked Questions

<http://www.anzascs.org.nz/faq.html>

Raising Children Network- The Australian Parenting Website

"The complete Australian resource for parenting newborns to teens"

- Includes information on Services and Support, Parenting after Separation and Child Development.

<http://raisingchildren.net.au/>

Family Law Courts- Children's Matters

- Information about Separation and Court Orders

<http://www.familylawcourts.gov.au/wps/wcm/connect/FLC/Home/Children%27s+Matters/>

Family Relationships Advice Line- Helping Families Build Better Relationships

- Information about the free Family Relationship Advice Line

<http://www.familyrelationships.gov.au/BrochuresandPublications/Pages/FRAL+brochure+April+2008.aspx>

Australian Childhood Foundation – Kids Count

- A list of National Helplines and State Specific Support and Information Services

<http://www.kidscount.com.au/english/contact.asp>

CHECKLIST

- Read all enclosed information
- Complete Family Contact Service Agreement and send to PRFC
- Complete Referral Form, ensuring all information relevant to the contact/transport is included.
- A one off payment for intake of the referral documentation is made once all forms have been submitted to PRFC.
- Referral Form is agreed upon, signed by both parties and forwarded to PRFC
- PRFC provided with a copy of court order/s or relevant information
- Intake and discussion between the PRFC scheduling team and the client/s regarding the signed forms
- Pricing agreement discussed/quote obtained and paying parties are aware of their payment obligations
- Paying parties have PRFC bank deposit, bank code information (to identify the family/service), and PRFC contact information details to advise when payment is completed
- PRFC provides both parties with a contact schedule

We thank you for your interest. Please contact us should this information pack not provide answers to your questions.