

INTRODUCTION TO PHOENIX RISING FOR CHILDREN



**PHOENIX
RISING**
FOR CHILDREN

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Phoenix Rising For Children (PRFC) is a child protection accredited organisation providing quality 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.

Australian law dictates that children/young people have the right of contact with their parents or significant other people if it does not affect their best interests.

PRFC recognise 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 services for children/young people.
2. PRFC provides an information pack including documentation that requires signing by the parties prior to being returned to PRFC.
3. PRFC receives completed forms including a Service Agreement and Referral Form, with payment of initial interview Intake Fee.
4. Intake occurs, 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. On completion of the Intake both parents receive notification of booked dates and confirmed arrangement for the visitation. The Financially responsible person is provided with an invoice for the first service date. Payment is required at least 2 business days prior to a scheduled visitation/transportation.
6. PRFC is notified of a payment.
7. A qualified contact supervisor is arranged for the agreed date.
8. Access visit/transportation takes place at the agreed time and place.
9. A quality and detailed supervision report is generally provided within ten (10) working days of the service date. This timeframe may vary depending on the service availability.

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 included in this document.

Family Contact Service Agreement

A Family Contact Service Agreement (The Agreement) needs to be completed by each party (usually the person being supervised and the person with whom the child/ren reside) and returned as soon as possible to PRFC. The Agreement contains terms and conditions of service use and asks 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 and their legal representatives and contains the arrangement that has been agreed by both the Resident Parent and Supervised Parent. 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 attached to the Service Agreement.

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.

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 incurred on the day of the visit. Travel/handover time must be considered 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 with whom we have a Service Agreement. Reports provide an account of the visit and include interactions between the child/young person and parents/other attendees. All reports are suitable for court filing.

Reports are a compulsory component of our service.

PAYMENT

Payment for the intake phone interview is required prior to this occurring. Payments for supervision/transportation are required at least **two business (2) days prior** to the visit and further information is included in the enclosed 'Payment Instruction Sheet'. 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 to prompt us to make the necessary arrangements for the visit/transportation.

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

CONTACT US

Phone: 02 9873 3992

Email: intake@phoenixrising.org.au

Web: www.phoenixrising.org.au

Office hours: Monday to Friday, 9am–5pm (excluding public holidays)

AFTER HOURS SUPPORT

In the case of an emergency or urgent issue, please telephone our office number 02 9873 3992 for direction. Please be aware after-hours support is for urgent matters, all other issues should be discussed with the administrative team, during Monday to Friday 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 supervision
- 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 the supervised parent and child
- PROVIDING INFORMATION to supervised parent from primary carer 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 well-being

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; always accompanying children and parents (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, considering 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 is provided to both parents and expected timeframe to receive this report is 7-10 business days from the date of the visit. 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 always kept safe and in confidence. 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.

FAMILY INFORMATION 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.

<https://accsa.org.au/>

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.familycourt.gov.au/wps/wcm/connect/fcoaweb/reports-and-publications/publications/Family+Violence/>

Family Relationships Advice Line- Helping Families Build Better Relationships

- Information about the free Family Relationship Advice Line

<https://www.familyrelationships.gov.au/>

Australian Childhood Foundation – Kids Count

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

<https://www.childhood.org.au/>

CHECKLIST

- Read all enclosed information.
- Complete Family Contact Service Agreement + Referral Form, ensuring all information relevant to the contact/transport is included and relevant court orders and legal documents attached.
- The Referral Form requires both parties to sign the same document and forwarded to PRFC.
- Payment of the Intake Fee by the person/s financially responsible for the service is required at the time of submitting the forms.
- Intake Phone Interview with both parents and visit arrangements are finalised.
- Requested dates are booked and a schedule provided to both client/s.
- 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.

Please contact us if you have further questions regarding the Information Pack and PRFC procedures.