

### What if I am feeling unsafe?

Post Separation Cooperative Parenting Services have arrangements in place to protect the safety of clients and staff. If you have concerns about your safety you should let the Service staff know as soon as possible.

### Will my child be safe?

The safety of all family members is very important in Post Separation Cooperative Parenting. If you have any concerns about your child's safety, please discuss this with the Service.

### Courts and Post Separation Cooperative Parenting

If you decide to go to court for a decision about your child, the court may recommend or order you or the other parent, or both, to participate in a post separation parenting program, such as Post Separation Cooperative Parenting or the Parenting Orders Program. A court can order attendance at these programs at any time during the court process. The court may also order you and the other parent to participate in supervised changeovers or contact visits at a Children's Contact Service.

If you, or the other parent, have not complied with a parenting order, a court may make a further order for you to attend a post separation parenting program.

If you have been ordered to attend a post separation parenting program, the court will be informed if you are unsuitable to attend or if you fail to attend. The court may then make further orders.

### What will it cost?

Post Separation Cooperative Parenting Services may charge fees depending on your financial circumstances. Let the Service know if you are on a low income or experiencing financial difficulties. The Service will have arrangements to make sure you can still attend the program.

### How do I contact a Post Separation Cooperative Parenting Service?

The Australian Government funds a number of community based organisations in regional Australia under the Family Relationship Services Program to provide Post Separation Cooperative Parenting Services.

For more information call the Family Relationship Advice Line on **1800 050 321** between **8am to 8pm Monday to Friday** and **10am to 4pm Saturdays** (except national public holidays). They can help you find the nearest service or suggest another appropriate service, such as the Parenting Orders Program or Family Counselling, if there is no Post Separation Cooperative Parenting Service near you.

You can also visit Family Relationships Online at [www.familyrelationships.gov.au](http://www.familyrelationships.gov.au)



Australian Government

## Help for separated parents in conflict



*Where separated families in regional Australia are in conflict, the Australian Government has funded Post Separation Cooperative Parenting Services to help parents focus on their children.*

## **What is Post Separation Cooperative Parenting?**

Post Separation Cooperative Parenting is the name of a post separation parenting program under the Family Law Act. It helps separated parents who are fighting learn how parental conflict affects children and why children need parents to be supportive of their relationship with the other parent. It helps parents focus on the needs of the children, instead of on the conflict.

## **Who can go to a Post Separation Cooperative Parenting Service?**

Separated parents who are not talking, who can't communicate without fighting or who are having trouble managing parenting arrangements may go to a Post Separation Cooperative Parenting Service. Services will arrange for parents to attend at separate times so that they don't have to meet. The program is aimed at both parents individually and is helpful even if only one parent attends.

## **Why should I go to a Post Separation Cooperative Parenting Service?**

Many separated parents know that conflict between them is making their child unhappy but feel that there is nothing they can do. Children may be struggling emotionally even when they seem fine on the surface. A Post Separation Cooperative Parenting Service can help you learn what children need after their parents have separated and find ways to help your child.

## **How can a Post Separation Cooperative Parenting Service help me if my ex and I can't cooperate, or if I hardly ever see my child?**

Post Separation Cooperative Parenting isn't about resolving the conflict with the other parent. It's about how conflict between separated parents affects children and what you, as an individual, can do about it. It can help you find out how you can help your child, whether or not he or she is living with you.

## **What happens at a Post Separation Cooperative Parenting Service?**

There are many things that can happen as part of a Post Separation Cooperative Parenting Service. There will always be an educational seminar with other parents who are having similar issues. A family counsellor will also offer other support depending on your needs. The Service will explain what to expect when you speak to them.

## **How long will Post Separation Cooperative Parenting take?**

The educational seminar will usually take about half a day. After that, a Post Separation Cooperative Parenting Service can provide further counselling and support. This might be a few weeks or many months.

## **What help is there for my child?**

Post Separation Cooperative Parenting is aimed at helping children through their parents. Some organisations may be able to offer counselling or other specialised assistance for children under a different program; or they may suggest other local services. You can discuss your child's needs with the Service at any time.

## **What other information will a Post Separation Cooperative Parenting Service give me?**

The family counsellor in the Post Separation Cooperative Parenting Service will give you information about parenting plans and other services available to help you and your family, such as dispute resolution.

## **When do I use a Post Separation Cooperative Parenting Service?**

The court may encourage or order parents to attend this Service. You or your child's other parent may be referred to a Post Separation Cooperative Parenting Service by a Children's Contact Service, Family Relationship Centre or any other service helping your family after separation. Sometimes, a separated parent makes their own decision to go to a Post Separation Cooperative Parenting Service.

## **Is what I say at a Post Separation Cooperative Parenting Service confidential?**

Yes. Under the Family Law Act, everything you say in front of a Post Separation Cooperative Parenting Service counsellor is confidential – except in certain circumstances, such as to prevent a serious threat to someone's life or health or to prevent the commission of a crime.

Under the Family Law Act, anything said by a person attending a post separation parenting program cannot be used as evidence in any court. However a service must report child abuse, or if there is a risk of abuse, to the authorities and this may be used as evidence in some circumstances.