

# **My family is separating – what now?**

**Helping families through the maze of separation**

**Presented by: Matt Miller, General Manager, Child Support Agency**

**Katrina Baird, Assistant General Manager, Child Support Agency**

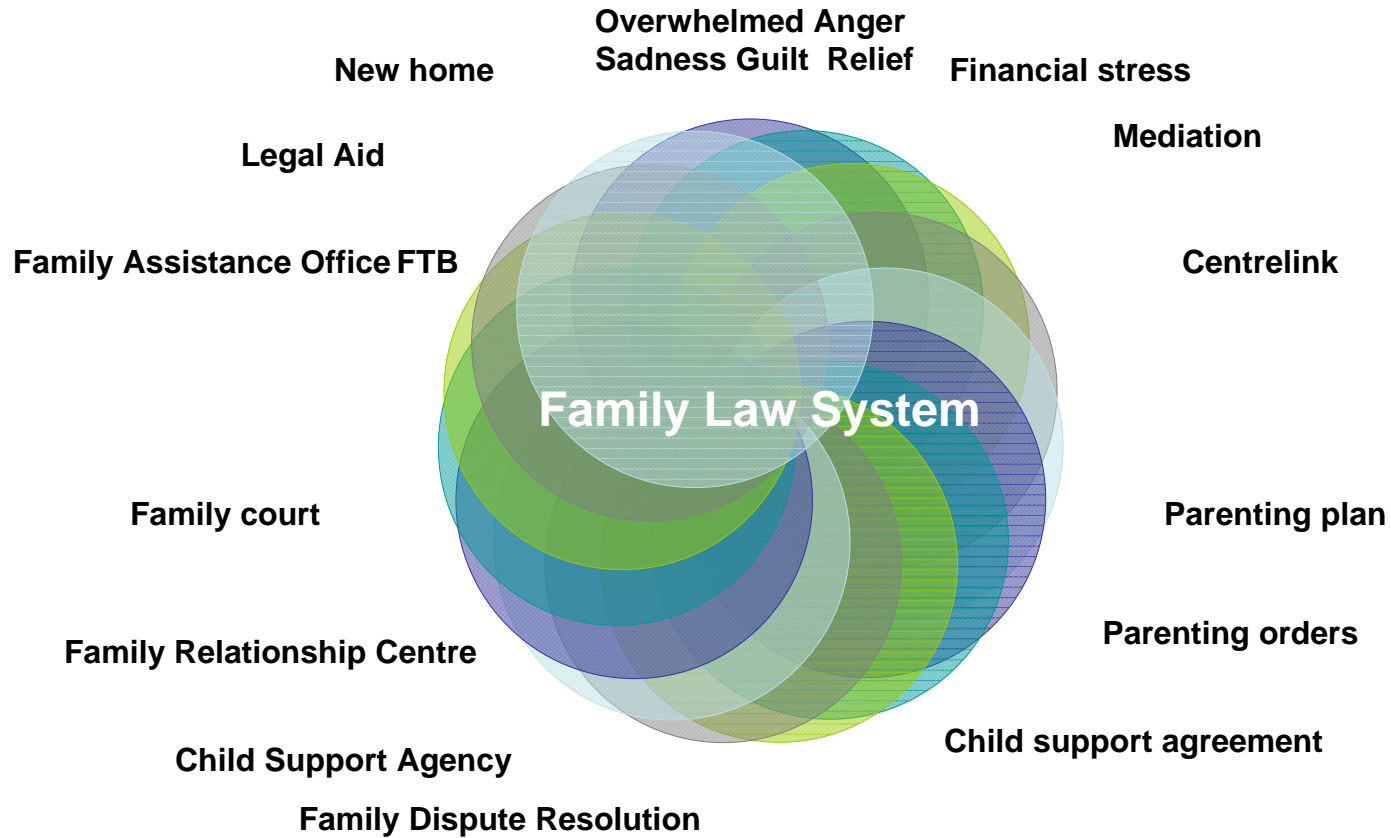


# Building a Better CSA

- **A new Child Support Scheme**
- **Customer Service Improvements**
- **Increased focus on compliance activities**
- **Working closely with our stakeholders**
- **Better support for separated families across the broader family law system**



# When people separate



# What are we aiming for?

- **Children have on-going, positive relationships with both their parents**
- **Parents make joint decisions about their children's wellbeing**
- **Parents share in the costs of raising their children**
- **Parents re-establish themselves and are optimistic about their future**



# What our stakeholders said...

- Need for a single tool to help parents make their way through the Family Law System
- Remove the trial and error process for parents
- Overwhelming at a time when they are often struggling with the emotional aspects of their situation
- Need for a referral tool for stakeholders to advise their customers on how to move through the system



# My family is separating – what now?

## Goals

- To help parents navigate the financial, legal and emotional issues they need to consider when their family separates
- To provide tool that is tailored to suit different family circumstances providing information, advice and referrals to help parents work through these complex matters
- To reduce the stress on separated families





## My family is separating – what now?

Separation can be a challenging time for everyone involved and presents a range of emotional, financial and legal issues. The information contained on this website is a guide to help families experiencing separation find their way around the Family Law System, better understand their rights and responsibilities following separation and includes information on services available to help.

To help you get started the information is presented in four scenarios - amicable separation, difficult separation, separation involving family violence and child abuse, and grandparents raising grandchildren. Simply choose the scenario that is closest to your circumstances and work your way through or browse through all scenarios to find the most relevant information.

- [Amicable separation](#)
- [Difficult separation](#)
- [Separation involving family violence](#)
- [Grandparents raising grandchildren](#)

The information provided on this site is meant as a guide only and is not intended as legal advice. For legal advice consult a solicitor.

**How well did this page meet your needs?**

Completely  Partially  Not at all



[Home](#) : Amicable separation

## Amicable separation

This information relates to relationship breakdown where there is a level of agreement between parents about children, property and finances.

When you and your partner decide to separate there are many decisions you will need to make regarding your children, property and your future. The following information is a guide to help you with the practical and emotional aspects of your separation and includes information to help you work out your options.

Some of the signs that you and your partner may have an amicable separation are:

- You both agree the needs of your children are the most important aspect of your separation
- You both agree that your children need the love, support and involvement of both parents
- You are able to sit down together and make a parenting plan for the day-to-day arrangements for your children
- You don't argue in front of the children
- You both agree you can share in special days for your children such as school activities, birthdays, Christmas or other religious festivals, and school holidays
- You both agree child support should be paid in full and on time
- You expect to agree on what is a fair settlement of your assets without going through the courts

## Support

Even if your separation is amicable you may be feeling a sense of loss as well as some anxiety about the future which can affect your emotional wellbeing. You may also be concerned about how your children will cope with your separation. If you or someone in your family is struggling with the emotional impact of your separation it's important to find some help.

- [Family relationship services](#)
- [Support for dads](#)
- [Support for mums](#)
- [Support for children](#)

# Stakeholder reference group

- **Worked closely with stakeholders to develop the content**
- **Stakeholders included**  
ACOSS, Mensline / Crisis Support Services, Dads in Distress, Sole Parents Union, Family Court, Attorney General's Department, Centrelink, FaHCSIA, National Council of Single Mothers and their Children, NT Legal Aid Commission, Shared Parenting Council of Australia, Boystown, Farrar Gesini and Dunn, Townsville Community Legal Service, Hudson, Henning and Goodwin, Relationships Australia, Perth City Family Relationship Centre, Family Law Reform Association, Grandparents and Other Relative Carers Alliance, Family Law Reform Association, Council on the Ageing, Grandparents Raising Grandchildren, Debt Education and Mediation Centre



# Format

- **An interactive web based format**
- **Parents can choose the pathway most appropriate to their family's circumstances and access the information and services at a time to suit them**
- **The information is divided into key areas of support, legal, & finances**
- **The pathways are designed to refer parents where possible to information**
- **This is a guide only and parents should seek legal advice**
- **Feedback mechanism incorporated.**



# User Testing

- **User testing to ensure effectiveness**
  - content, navigation, useability and design and overall effectiveness
- **Methodology**
  - customers test prototype, fill in survey, workshop, two on one useability testing



# Distribution

- **The pathways will be located on the CSA website and maintained by CSA**
- **Inviting other government agencies, family law practices, community service organisations to link or embed the pathways on their website for their customers**
- **Proactive promotion through CSA stakeholder groups, stakeholder networks, newsletters and the media.**



# Benefits

- **Reduce parents' levels of stress and issues associated with separation**
- **Reduce the impact of separation on children**
- **Increased referrals to appropriate support services**
- **Collaborate with stakeholders to meet the needs of our mutual customers**
- **Provide our staff and community service organisations with an additional tool to refer/help their customers**
- **Work across government and the community sector to align with the broader government goal of 'joined up' services for customers.**



# What next?

- **Complete user testing and incorporate recommendations into the final product**
- **We want your feedback and feedback from your customers on how we can improve this service**
- **We invite you to include the Separated Family Pathways on your website**
- **Possible addition of new pathways/scenarios**



# Questions?

