

# QFCC Parent Voice: Hearing from parents about their experiences of the child protection system

## About the survey

The Parent Voice survey asked Queensland parents and families about their experiences of the child protection system.

Parents provided feedback about whether they:

- were recognised and respected
- were treated fairly
- had information and decisions explained
- had opportunities for positive parent-child contact
- received effective family support services
- were involved in choosing appropriate support
- felt their culture, background, language, and practices were respected and understood
- maintained connection to First Nations culture
- had their personal information treated respectfully and sensitively.

This is the first survey of its kind and provides new insights and a baseline for improvements.

The full survey report can be found [here](#)



## Method

Parents were asked to complete an online survey through Market and Communication Research or via the Family Inclusion Network.



87%

Family Inclusion Network

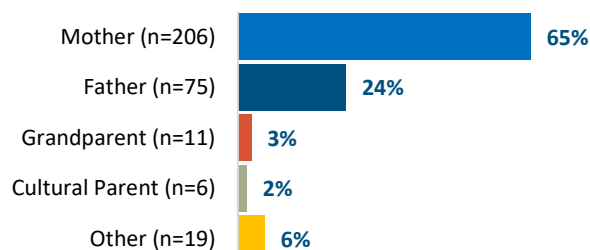
13%



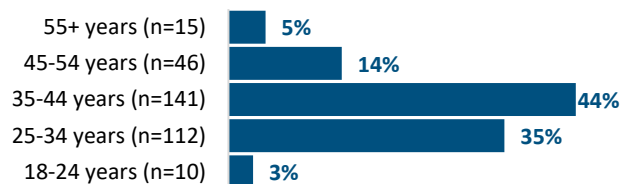
## Respondents

A total of **324** Queensland parents and families who had interacted with the child protection system participated in the survey and provided their experiences of the system. Of all respondents, **13%** (n=41) identified as First Nations.

## Relationship with child



## Age group



In 2023, around one third (**36%**) of respondents had experience with Child Safety within the last 12 months. **24%** of respondents indicated their most recent experience was within the last 1 to 2 years, **18%** within 2 to 5 years and **22%** more than 5 years ago.

Around one third of parents or families (**34%**) were aware of the Charter of Rights for parents.



Queensland  
Family & Child  
Commission



Queensland  
Government



## Key findings

### Information and decisions were explained clearly

65% agree

65% of respondents agreed that information and decisions were explained to them in a language they understood. 22% disagreed, while 11% neither agreed nor disagreed.

Respondents who were more likely to disagree included: respondents aged 45 years or older (40%); carers other than a mother or father (33%); those living in the Southwest region (37%) or those who had had contact with the system within the last 12 months (30%).

### Opportunities to have contact with their child

53% agree

53% of respondents agreed they were provided with the best possible opportunities to have contact with their child to continue forging a positive and healthy relationship (27% agreed, 26% strongly agreed). A total of 28% disagreed and 15% neither agreed nor disagreed.

### What parents and families say is working well in the system

12%	Empathy / respect
11%	Support network
10%	Children are prioritised / protected
9%	Communication
8%	Staff attitude
8%	Information flow

### Personal information was protected

55% agree

55% of respondents agreed their personal information was treated respectfully and sensitively. A total of 23% disagreed and 17% neither agreed nor disagreed.

Respondents were asked to identify what could have improved the way their personal information was treated, with the most likely improvements recorded as:

- Strengthening confidentiality (37%)
- Preventing unfair assumptions / bias / lack of investigation / false accusations (5%)
- Improving empathy / understanding / to be shown respect (4%)

*"Privacy laws were respected"*

*"More transparency would have helped"*

### Fair treatment by the child protection system

47% agree

Less than half of respondents agreed they were treated fairly by the child protection system. A total of 36% disagreed (14% disagreed, 21% strongly disagreed) while 15% neither agreed nor disagreed.

Subgroups most likely to **disagree** that they were treated fairly by the system included:



Respondents aged 45 years or older (53%)



Respondents who have had contact with the system within the last 12 months (48%)

## Access to family support services

**45% agree**

Less than half (45%) of respondents agreed they received family support services that helped their family. A total of 36% disagreed (14% disagreed, 22% strongly disagreed) and 17% neither agreed nor disagreed.

Respondents significantly more likely to disagree with this statement included:

- Respondents aged 45 years or older (57%)
- Carers other than a mother or father (51%)
- those living in the Sunshine Coast and Central region (51%)
- those who have had contact with the system within the last 12 months (49%)

## Parents are recognised and respected by the child protection system

**45% agree**

45% of respondents agreed with the statement 'You felt recognised and respected in your role as a parent, by the child protection system' (30% agreed, 15% strongly agreed). A total of 38% disagreed (14% disagreed, 25% strongly disagreed) and 14% neither agreed nor disagreed.

### What parents and families say is not working well in the system

15%	Lack of Empathy / respect
11%	Everything / entire system
11%	Unfair assumptions / bias
10%	Communication
10%	Staff attitude
7%	Children not prioritised / failed by the system

## Had input into the type of support

**45% agree**

45% of respondents agreed they had a say in the type of support to ensure it was appropriate for their family (e.g. including timing and location) (30% agreed, 15% strongly agreed). 35% of respondents disagreed (14% disagreed, 22% strongly disagreed) while 17% neither agreed nor disagreed.

*"The care was appreciated and appropriate at the time when we were struggling"*

*"Aside from initial visit, all sessions were planned ahead to fit our schedule"*

## Culture, background language, and practices were respected, understood, and considered

**39% agree**

Among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents, 39% agreed their culture, background, language, and practices were respected, understood, and considered in the decisions made about their family (22% agreed, 17% strongly agreed). A total of 34% disagreed while 24% neither agreed nor disagreed.

## Able to have connections to language, family, community, Country, culture and spiritual practices and beliefs

**37% agree**

Among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents, 37% agreed they were able to maintain and strengthen their connections to language, family community, Country, culture and spiritual practices and beliefs (13% agreed, 24% strongly agreed). 39% disagreed (13% disagreed, 26% strongly disagreed) and 24% neither agreed nor disagreed.

Note: verbatim comments are respondents' own words.