When you’re worried about a child, there are many things you can do to help. You may be concerned about what to do and about the potential consequences for the child and yourself. The best thing to do will depend on the child’s circumstances and how serious your concerns are.

There is support available to help you make a decision about how to respond when you have concerns about a child.

Key facts:

- You should always act reasonably and in the child’s best interest.
- Depending on how serious your concerns are for the child, you may support the child and family and monitor the child’s wellbeing, refer the family for support, or report the concerns to Child Safety Services.

If you’re worried about a child and need help to decide what to do:

2. Talk to your supervisor or line manager
3. Call Family and Child Connect on 13FAMILY (13 32 64) for information and advice

- There are many services available for families who need support. Oneplace can help you find services to help the family with their specific needs in their own local area.

If you think a family needs help, you can search the oneplace Community Services Directory at: www.oneplace.org.au

- Some professionals can refer families to Family and Child Connect or another service without the family’s consent. This is because it is more important that assistance is offered early and things don’t get worse for the child. These professionals are called particular prescribed entities.

Anyone can contact Family and Child Connect for advice and support about a family and can refer a family with their consent.


Or the Family and Child Connect website: www.familychildconnect.org.au

- Anyone can report to Child Safety Services. Only report to Child Safety Services if you suspect a child needs protection.

You do not need the family’s consent to report to Child Safety Services. In most circumstances, your identity will not be revealed to the family.
What should I do if I’m worried about a child?

Are you worried that the child has suffered, is suffering or is at unacceptable risk of suffering significant harm?

NO

Are you worried the child is likely to need protection if no support is given?

NO

Do you have worries about the child that do not meet the above criteria?

YES

Are you from a particular prescribed entity?

YES

NO

If you are not from a particular prescribed entity, you cannot make a referral to a support service without consent. CONTINUE TO SUPPORT AND MONITOR the child and family, where possible. Encourage the family to consent to a referral and provide them with relevant information to seek help. Contact Family and Child Connect for information and advice on how to support the family, if required.

YES

Does the family consent to a referral?

YES

REPORT TO CHILD SAFETY SERVICES

NO, OR DON’T KNOW

Does the child have a parent able and willing to protect them from harm?

YES

REFER TO FAMILY AND CHILD CONNECT OR AN APPROPRIATE SUPPORT SERVICE

NO

Does the family consent to a referral?

YES

REFER TO FAMILY AND CHILD CONNECT OR AN APPROPRIATE SUPPORT SERVICE

NO

Does the child have a parent able and willing to protect them from harm?

YES

REPORT TO CHILD SAFETY SERVICES

NO

See the Queensland Family and Child Commission’s fact sheet Terms in child protection for more information about the terms used in this diagram: www.qfcc.qld.gov.au/child-protection-resources
If you have concerns about a child who Child Safety Services is working with, always contact Child Safety Services to provide information about your concerns. Child Safety Services will decide whether to address the concerns through ongoing case work with the family or commence a new investigation.

To decide whether you need consent to refer a child for support or report your concerns about a child, refer to the table below.

### Do I need consent to refer or report?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I am from</th>
<th>I want to refer or report to</th>
<th>Is consent required?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Child Safety Services</td>
<td>• Family and Child Connect</td>
<td>NO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• A support service</td>
<td>NO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• A particular prescribed entity</td>
<td>• Family and Child Connect</td>
<td>NO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• A support service</td>
<td>NO</td>
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<td>• Child Safety Services</td>
<td>NO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Another Family and Child Connect</td>
<td>YES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• A support service</td>
<td>YES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• A professional, support service, organisation or agency that is not a particular prescribed entity</td>
<td>• Child Safety Services</td>
<td>NO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Family and Child Connect</td>
<td>YES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• A support service</td>
<td>YES</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The information in the flow chart and table above can be found in Child Safety Services’ guide *Protecting children and supporting families*. To read more, check out: [www.communities.qld.gov.au/gateway/supporting-families/resources](http://www.communities.qld.gov.au/gateway/supporting-families/resources)

### Support and Monitor

If you have ongoing contact with a child, parent or family there is often a lot you can do to help. Speak to the family about the things you are worried about and ask whether they would like some help. You may be able to do some things to help the family yourself, even if it is simply checking with them more often to ask if things are okay. You may also be able to encourage them to seek the support of their family and friends or help them access a service in the community.

Parents find asking for help difficult.

Research conducted by Ipsos Public Affairs shows people find it easier to offer support or accept support if offered. However, *asking* for support is more difficult.

The research identified that 70% of parents worry they will be judged negatively if they struggle with parenting. This is one of the major barriers to seeking help.


You can always let a family know to contact **13FAMILY (13 32 64)** if they need help.
Refer
There are many services available that can provide support to children and their families. The oneplace Community Services Directory is an online directory of community services in Queensland. You can search the directory for local services that can help the family with their identified needs. The family may need your support to connect with the service.

When a family has two or more needs, this is referred to as ‘complex needs’. For example, there may be support needs with drug use, parenting skills and material assistance. Family and Child Connect is a local community-based service that helps families to care for and protect their children at home by connecting them to the right services at the right time. Family and Child Connect works with families who have multiple needs but you can also contact Family and Child Connect for information and advice on how best to respond to the concerns you have about the child or their family.

You can contact Family and Child Connect by calling 13FAMILY (13 32 64)

Intensive Family Support services also work with vulnerable families who have complex needs to prevent them from needing Child Safety Services involvement in the future. You can refer the family directly to this service.

A Principal Child Protection Practitioner (PCPP) is employed by Child Safety Services and assists Family and Child Connect and Intensive Family Support services to make decisions about families that may require intervention by Child Safety Services. For more information about PCPPs, visit: www.communities.qld.gov.au/gateway/supporting-families/resources

When parents don’t consent to a referral
Some professionals, known as particular prescribed entities, can refer a family for support without their consent. This can only be done where the professional believes the family is at risk of needing Child Safety Services’ intervention in the future. Other professionals can only refer a family for support if they consent.

Sometimes parents may refuse to accept help or even deny there is anything wrong. There is still a lot you can do. If you have an ongoing professional relationship with the parents or child, keep connected and ask if everything is okay more often. You should also provide the family with information about available services. It is often the case that a family will contact a service when they are ready. Speak with your colleagues or other community partners for ideas on how to encourage family consent.

Depending on how significant your concerns for the child are, you may like to consult the Child Protection Guide again to check if the parent’s refusal to accept support results in a different outcome. This won’t always be the case, especially where the concerns are not as serious. Remember, you can also call Family and Child Connect for advice about how to engage families.

Report

If you suspect a child needs protection, you need to contact Child Safety Services:

- During normal business hours - contact the Regional Intake Service.
- After hours and on weekends - contact the Child Safety After Hours Service Centre on 1800 177 135 or (07) 3235 9999. The service operates 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

You can also report to Child Safety Services by completing an online report form or using your own organisation’s reporting form. Refer to your organisation’s policy for more information.

If you believe a child is in immediate danger or in a life-threatening situation, contact Emergency Services immediately by dialling 000.

When you make a report to Child Safety Services or the police, your details are kept confidential and your identity is protected.

Mandatory Reporting

Some professionals are required by law to report to Child Safety Services if they suspect a child needs protection resulting from sexual or physical abuse. In Queensland, this includes:

- teachers in schools
- doctors
- registered nurses
- some police officers
- an early childhood education and care professional
- officers of the Public Guardian
- Child Safety Services
- licensed care services.