

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

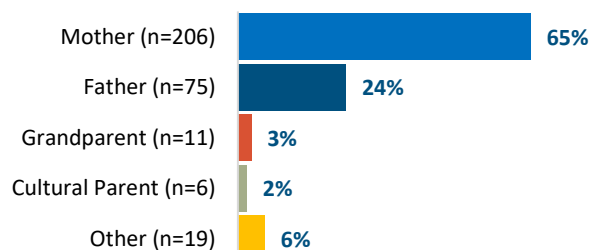
13%



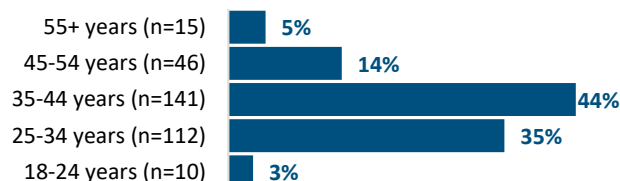
Respondents

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.



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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.