

## Asking for decision-making responsibility, parenting time, or contact

### A Self-Help Guide:

## How to complete Form 35.1: Affidavit (decision- making responsibility, parenting time, contact)

This guide is not legal advice. If you have questions or need advice about your case, you should speak to a lawyer.

The Law Society Referral Service (LSRS) can provide you with the name of a lawyer in your area, who will provide a free initial consultation of up to 30 minutes. To access the LSRS, visit <https://lsrs.iso.ca> and complete the online request form. If you are unable to use the online service because you are in a crisis, you may call 1-855-947-5255.

If you cannot afford a lawyer, you can contact Legal Aid Ontario to discuss your eligibility for legal aid services at 1-800-668-8258. To learn more about Legal Aid Ontario, you may wish to visit their website at [www.legalaid.on.ca](http://www.legalaid.on.ca).

If you choose to represent yourself and want help completing your court forms, you can use the Guided Pathways to Family Court Forms. This free online tool asks you questions and puts your answers into the required court forms. When you're finished, you can save or print your completed forms. You can find more information, and access the tool, at <https://stepstojustice.ca/guided-pathways>.

*Ce guide est également disponible en Français.*

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## INTRODUCTION

This guide is for anyone asking the court for decision-making responsibility, parenting time, or contact with one or more children.

### A NOTE ABOUT TERMS USED IN THIS DOCUMENT

The *Divorce Act* and *Children's Law Reform Act* contain most of the law that applies to the care, upbringing, and responsibility for children. Up until March 1, 2021, these laws used terms like "custody" and "access". These laws have changed to adopt more neutral, child-focused language. Now, we do not use the terms "custody" and "access." Instead, we use the following terms:

- **"Decision-making responsibility"** means the responsibility to make significant decisions about a child, such as their education, medical care, and religion.
- **"Parenting time"** means the time that a child spends in the care of a person with a parental role, whether or not the child is physically with that person during the entire time. Parenting time includes the right to make day-to-day decisions when the child is with that parent (such as bed time), unless a court orders otherwise. A person with parenting time or decision-making responsibility can request and receive information about the child from the other parent or from third parties.
- **"Contact"** means the time that a child spends with a person other than a parent, like a relative or friend. That person would ask for a "contact order".

A **"parenting order"** can include orders about "decision-making responsibility" and "parenting time".

A **"contact order"** means an order respecting contact with a child by any person other than the parent of a child, including a grandparent.

### 1. Do I need an order for decision-making responsibility?

A spouse, a parent, or any person seeking a parental role can ask the court for decision-making responsibility.

You might need a decision-making responsibility order if:

- You are not living with your child's other parent and have not been able to negotiate or mediate parenting arrangements.
- You are looking after a child whose parents have died or are unavailable, unable or unwilling to care for the child.

You might need a court order to prove you have decision-making responsibility if you have to:

- register a child for school.

- consent to medical treatment.
- apply for a passport.

You may wish to speak to a lawyer about whether you need a parenting order because you may be able to resolve issues relating to the child without going to court.

## 2. Do I need an order for parenting time or contact?

A spouse, a parent, or any person seeking a parental role can ask the court for parenting time.

You can ask for a contact order if you are a friend or relative who wants to spend time with the child (whether you physically visit the child or communicate using technology).

If there are safety concerns, parenting time or contact may be supervised or restricted in some way.

**Each family's situation will guide how parenting time is scheduled. If there are no safety concerns, it is usually best for children to spend enough time with all parents to develop and maintain strong and healthy relationships. A child should spend as much time with each parent as is consistent with the child's best interests.**

When deciding what type of parenting time or contact arrangements you would like for your child, you should think about what arrangements would work best for your child. Consider the child's schedule and how far they have to travel. Keep in mind that as children grow older, their schedules may change and arrangements may have to be flexible.

## 3. What does "best interests of the child" mean?

Many parents are able to decide together what is best for their child. They know their child, what they need, and are prepared to work together to make that happen even after they separate or divorce. Some parents work things out on their own - others get help from a professional such as a mediator, social worker, or lawyer.

Some parents are unable to agree on parenting arrangements and need a judge to review the child's circumstances and make an order. When a judge makes parenting decisions, the law requires them to make the decision based on the best interests of the child.

The judge will make a decision based on **evidence**. If you are asking for decision-making responsibility, parenting time or contact, you must show that what you are asking for is best for the child. The judge will focus on the child, not the adults. The court will weigh the options available and make a decision about what arrangement is best for the child.

Even if you and the other parent agree, the judge will still need to understand why the arrangement you have agreed to will be safe and appropriate for the child.

In Ontario, the laws about decision-making responsibility, parenting time, and contact are in the [Divorce Act](#) and the [Children's Law Reform Act](#). Section 16 of the *Divorce Act* and section 24 of the *Children's Law Reform Act* tell the court the things to consider when making an order in a child's best interests.

### **Best Interests of the Child**

The law says that the judge must consider all factors related to the circumstances of the child. The most important factors are the child's physical, emotional, and psychological safety, security, and well-being. The judge must also consider other factors, including:

- the child's needs based on their age and stage of development
- the nature and strength of the child's relationship with each parent, sibling, and grandparents and any other person who plays an important role in the child's life
- the parent's willingness to support the child's relationship with the other parent
- the history of care of the child
- the child's wishes, depending on the child's age and maturity
- the child's heritage including Indigenous upbringing and heritage
- any plans for the child's care
- the ability and willingness of each parent to meet the child's needs
- the ability and willingness of each parent or person with a contact order to communicate and co-operate on matters affecting the child
- any family violence and its impact on,
  - the ability and willingness of any person who engaged in the family violence to care for and meet the needs of the child
  - the appropriateness of making an order that would require persons in respect of whom the order would apply to co-operate on issues affecting the child
- any court proceeding, court order or condition (e.g., bail condition) that is relevant to the safety, security and well-being of the child

The list of best interests for a court to consider is “non-exhaustive,” which means that courts may consider other factors not in this list to determine the best interests of a particular child.

## **APPLYING FOR A PARENTING ORDER (DECISION-MAKING RESPONSIBILITY, PARENTING TIME) OR A CONTACT ORDER**

### **4. How do I know what steps I have to take?**

The *Family Law Rules* set out the steps that you must take and the forms you must complete in a family court case. For example, Rule 8 tells you how to start a case. Rule 10 explains how to answer a case that has been started against you.

You can find the *Family Law Rules* at [www.ontario.ca/laws/regulation/990114](http://www.ontario.ca/laws/regulation/990114).

You can find the forms at [www.ontariocourtforms.on.ca](http://www.ontariocourtforms.on.ca).

### **5. What forms do I need?**

If you are **starting an application** for decision-making responsibility, parenting time, or contact, you will need to complete the following forms:

- [Form 8](#): Application (General)
- [Form 35.1](#): Affidavit (decision-making responsibility, parenting time, contact)
- [Form 35.1A](#): Affidavit (child protection information) – only completed if you, the other party, or the children have been involved in a child protection court case or received child protection services at any time

If you are **responding to a claim** and want to ask for decision-making responsibility, parenting time or contact, you will need to complete the following forms:

- [Form 10: Answer](#)
- [Form 35.1](#): Affidavit (decision-making responsibility, parenting time, contact)
- [Form 35.1A](#): Affidavit (child protection information) – only completed if you, the other party, or the children have been involved in a child protection court case or received child protection services at any time

The focus of this self-help guide is how to complete a Form 35.1: Affidavit (decision-making responsibility, parenting time, contact)

### **6. What if I need an order right away?**

If possible, you should talk to a lawyer to seek legal advice. If you would like to speak with a lawyer, but do not know who to call, the Law Society Referral Service can provide you with the name of a lawyer who will provide a free initial

consultation for up to 30 minutes to help determine your rights and options. If you decide to retain the lawyer, their normal fees and disbursements would apply. If you would like to be referred to a lawyer, you may submit a request to the Law Society Referral Service at [www.findlegalhelp.ca](http://www.findlegalhelp.ca). The telephone number for the service is 1-800-268-8326 or, within the Greater Toronto Area, 416-947-3330.

There are also duty counsel and/or advice counsel available in many court locations. These lawyers may be able to assist you to complete your forms. For more information about Legal Aid Ontario, their website is [www.legalaid.on.ca](http://www.legalaid.on.ca). You can reach Legal Aid Ontario at 1-800-668-8258 (toll-free) Monday to Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. for help.

If you can't afford to hire a lawyer for your whole case, some lawyers provide "unbundled services" or "limited scope retainer" services. This means you pay them to help you with part of your case.

If you need to ask the court for an order right away, you can bring a motion for a judge to decide a specific issue at any time during your court case. To bring a motion, in addition to the forms completed to start or respond to a claim, you will also have to file:

- [Form 14: Notice of Motion; and](#)
- [Form 14A: Affidavit \(general\)](#)

If your situation is an emergency and you must get an order immediately, provide as much information as possible in the Form 14A: Affidavit. If you are in a crisis and are not sure what the details of your plan will be, indicate what your immediate plans are. You can file an amended form with more details and updated information when your situation becomes clearer.

**Refer to subrules [14 \(4\)](#) and [\(4.2\)](#) if your motion is urgent.**

## **7. Will information in the court file be confidential?**

Generally, members of the public can look at family court files, other than child protection files.

If you believe that the disclosure of any information contained in documents in your court file could lead to physical, mental or emotional harm to someone, including a child, you can file a motion with the court asking for an order restricting access to the court file.

Please note that if you have completed Form 35.1A: Affidavit (child protection information), this form will be kept in a separate envelope in the court file. This means that only the judge, court staff, the parties and their lawyers, will be able to see the information contained in this form.

## TIPS FOR COMPLETING FORM 35.1

1. Read the form carefully.
2. Follow the instructions.
3. If you are starting the case, you are the applicant.
4. If you are responding to someone else's claim, you are a respondent.
5. If you are not sure who should be a party, refer to [rule 7](#) of the *Family Law Rules*.
6. If you are asked for a "full legal name", include the first, middle (if any) and last names.
7. If you have legally changed your name or used any other names during your life, including when you married or remarried, include those names in paragraph 1.

### 8. How should I start?

Before you start filling in the form, it is a good idea to read Form 35.1 all the way through. Read the instructions and think about what information the judge will need to make a decision.

The Form 35.1: Affidavit is your chance to tell the court what your plan is for the child(ren) and why it is a good one. **This affidavit is about your plan.** It is not about the other parent or person who might want decision-making responsibility, parenting time or contact. Focus on how your plan will give the child(ren) stability and the best chance to meet their potential.

When you have finished completing Form 35.1, it must be sworn or affirmed. This means that when you sign this form, it is the same as taking the witness stand and promising to tell the truth. (See question 23 of this guide for details.)

Everyone must complete Part A of the form. You only have to complete Part B if you are not the child's parent. (See Completing Part B at page 15.)

### 9. Where do I get the form?

If you have access to a computer, you can complete the form using a "guided interview" process by going to <https://stepstojustice.ca/family-law-guided-pathways/about>. You will be asked a series of questions and the program will complete the form for you. Make sure to provide details in your answers. Check the completed form carefully and make any necessary changes before you swear that the information is true, and you file the form with the court.

If you have a computer and would prefer to fill out the form yourself, you can get a fillable word version of [Form 35.1](#) at [www.ontariocourtforms.on.ca](http://www.ontariocourtforms.on.ca).

If you want to complete the Form 35.1 by hand, you can get a copy from the court office or print off the PDF version from [www.ontariocourtforms.on.ca](http://www.ontariocourtforms.on.ca).

### **10. How do I know if I “acted as a parent”? (Part A, Paragraph 3)**

The court wants to know if you have any other children and if you have taken on a parenting role for any children other than those included in the application.

Include information about:

- Your biological children;
- Your adopted children;
- Your step-children;
- Children for whom you were named a “legal guardian”.

If you have been a **foster parent** for a children’s aid society (CAS), it is not necessary for you to list each of the children who have been placed with you. You can simply indicate that you are or were a foster parent and give the names of the CAS or foster care agency you worked for. You may also include the approximate dates when you were a foster parent.

### **11. How do I know if I was a party in a family court case? (Part A, Paragraph 4)**

You were a party if you were:

- the applicant;
- the respondent; or
- added as a party by the court.

If you went to court to be a witness or to support someone, you were not a party.

### **12. What should I do if I have been a party in a family court case, or have been involved in a civil protection proceeding and need to attach court orders or endorsements? (Paragraphs 4 and 5)**

In these sections the court is asking you to provide copies of any orders that were made in other family court cases involving you, the child(ren) in this case, or any other child(ren). You should include copies of temporary and final orders if you have them.

The court is also asking you to provide a copy of any court orders or endorsements you have that have been made in a civil court that dealt with protecting a person’s safety, including a restraining order. A civil court is not a family court, or a criminal court. An endorsement is the written direction a judge gives the parties about what they must do or not do. It is often handwritten.

If you have a copy of the order, attach it to the Form 35.1. If you do not have an order but have a copy of the judge’s handwritten endorsement, you can attach the endorsement instead.

If you don't have either the order or endorsement, you can get a copy by asking the staff at the court office where the order was made for a copy.

### **13. What information does the court need about violence or abuse? (Paragraph 8)**

The *Divorce Act* and the *Children's Law Reform Act* require a judge to consider whether anyone who is asking for decision-making responsibility for, parenting time or contact with a child has committed violence against certain people when assessing that person's ability to act as a parent.

You must disclose if you have committed violence or abuse against any of the following people:

- your spouse;
- a parent of the child in your application;
- a member of your household; or
- any child

In addition, if you are aware that any other party in your case has committed violence or abuse you should include information about that under paragraph 8.

Family violence can be any conduct that is violent or threatening, or is a pattern of coercive and controlling behaviour, or that causes a family member to fear for their safety or for that of another person. In the case of a child, it also includes direct or indirect exposure to such conduct. This does not necessarily mean that the violence constituted a criminal offence.

### **14. Who should be included as a “caregiver” of the child? (Paragraph 11)**

Anyone who had decision-making responsibility or legal responsibility for a child is considered a “caregiver”. A caregiver includes a:

- parent;
- legal guardian; or
- children's aid society.

Do not include babysitters, nannies, or a person who looked after the child for a short period of time while the main caregiver was away.

If the child was in the care of a children's aid society (CAS), you do not have to include the names of the foster parents. Just give the name of the CAS and the approximate dates the child was with that CAS.

### **15. Why does the court need to know about people who live with me? (Paragraph 12 (b))**

The court wants to know who else will be living with you to ensure that the child will be safe. If you are living with anyone (other than the children who are part of the application) and you do not know if they have a criminal record or if any of their children were in the care of a CAS, you must ask the person for this

information. Make sure you tell them that you will be providing this information under oath, and that it will be filed with the court, so it must be the truth.

## **16. What does “contact with others” mean? (Paragraph 12 (g))**

If you are asking for decision-making responsibility for a child, the court wants to know what your plans are for the child to spend time with others. The court’s main concern is what parenting time the child will have with their parents, although it will want to know what time the child will spend with other family or community members if those people are important to the child.

Remember, the court will only order no parenting time between a parent and a child if it would be harmful to the child.

If you have worked out a parenting time schedule with the other party, or contact schedule with someone, you can include that information here.

### **Examples of parenting time arrangements:**

**Specific:** “Every Tuesday and Thursday from 5:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. and every other weekend from Friday after school to Sunday at 6:00 p.m.”

**Flexible:** “Reasonable parenting time s agreed by the parties.”

Flexible arrangements may be suitable for extended family members or if it is not possible to fix a schedule.

The parenting or contact time or should take into account the child’s schedule and what will work best for them.

## **17. What are “special needs”? (Paragraph 12 (h))**

A child with “special needs” has needs above and beyond those that are typical for a child at their age and stage of development. The court wants to make sure that if a child needs extra help or services, you will do your best to make sure they are provided.

### **Some examples of special needs are:**

- a medical condition that requires ongoing attention from doctors or visits to a clinic or hospital; or
- learning difficulties that require placement in a specific class, school or program.

## **18. What kind of support from my family and friends should I include? (Paragraph 12 (i))**

You do not have to include information about financial support you may receive from family and friends. You could include information about family and friends

who will help out with babysitting or be available to help in times of emergency. The judge will want to know what supports you have to make your plan work for the child. For example: “My sister has agreed to look after the children every Tuesday afternoon.” If you do not have anyone who will be a reliable support person, you can write “not applicable.”

### **19. What if the information I provide in the Form 35.1 changes? (Paragraph 13)**

If the change to your situation is minor, you can swear a general affidavit ([Form 14A](#)) in which you explain what has changed and if or how it might affect your plan. For example, you may have completed the Form 35.1 while your child was still in day-care. If time passes and your child graduates from their day-care program into an after-school program, that change in child care arrangements can be explained in a short affidavit .

If the change is more substantial, you must complete a new Form 35.1: Affidavit so that the court has accurate and up-to-date information.

### **20. How do I know if I, the other party or the child(ren) in this case have been involved in a child protection court case? (Paragraph 14)**

You and/or the other party were involved in a child protection court case if either of you are the child’s parent or legal caregiver, and a child protection application was heard by a court. You/they were a party to a child protection case if you were:

- the applicant;
- one of the respondents named in the case; or
- if the court added you as a party.

If this describes your situation, you must complete Form 35.1A: Affidavit (child protection information).

### **21. How do I know if I, the other party or the child(ren) in this case have been involved with child protection services? (Paragraph 14)**

Child protection services are provided by Children’s Aid Societies (CASs). These services include connecting children and families to the services they need in order to remain safe and thriving. Children’s Aid Societies do this by working with community service providers, and in some cases provide supportive services themselves. This assistance might be provided to a family on a voluntary basis, or through a voluntary service agreement, without any court involvement. The kinds of services you might receive from, or through a CAS, can include:

- Getting counselling for you or your child(ren)
- Getting help for an addiction
- CAS workers visiting your home

If you have received services from a CAS, been referred to a community service by a CAS, or entered into a voluntary service agreement with a CAS, then you

have been involved with child protection services and you must complete Form 35.1A: Affidavit (child protection information)

**22. What if I made a mistake or forgot something in my Form 35.1: Affidavit?**

If the mistake or inaccuracy is minor, you can file a general affidavit ([Form 14A](#)) explaining the correct information.

If there is a lot of information that needs to be corrected, file an updated [Form 35.1](#).

**23. How do I swear or affirm my Form 35.1: Affidavit?**

If you are the parent of the child, you will swear or affirm your Form 35.1: Affidavit at the end of Part A. If you are not a parent, you will need to swear or affirm your Form 35.1: Affidavit at the end of Part B.

To swear or affirm your Form 35.1: Affidavit, you will need to sign at the relevant Part, as indicated in the form, in front of either a:

- lawyer
- notary public
- justice of the peace, or
- commissioner for taking oaths

If you do not have a lawyer, you can go to a court office for assistance. Many of the court staff are commissioners for taking oaths.

**What is the difference between swearing and affirming?**

**Swearing:** a faith-based oath to tell the truth

**Affirming:** a solemn promise to tell the truth

**It is a criminal offence to knowingly swear or affirm a false affidavit.**

**COMPLETING PART B**

You must only complete Part B if you are asking for an order for **decision-making responsibility** for a child and you are NOT the child's parent.

For more information on determining who is a parent, refer to: <https://stepstojustice.ca/sites/default/files/Who-is-a-parent.pdf>

**Parents are not required to complete Part B.**

## **24. When would I be presumed to be a father?**

Unless there is proof that you are not a child's father, you will be presumed to be a child's father if you are male and one of the following circumstances applies to you:

- a. You were married to the child's mother at the time the child was born;
- b. You were married to the child's mother within 300 days before the child was born;
- c. You married the child's mother after the child was born and acknowledged that you were the child's natural father;
- d. You were living with the child's mother, and in a relationship of some permanence within 300 days before the child was born;
- e. You certified on the statement of live birth that you are the child's father; or
- f. A court has found you to be the father of the child.

## **25. What extra information do I have to give the court if I am not a parent? (Paragraphs 16, 17 and 18)**

You have to provide the court with a police records check that was completed not more than 60 days before you started your case.

You have to provide a list of the places that you lived since you turned 18 or became a parent, whichever was earlier, and you have to provide a consent form to the court authorizing children's aid societies (CASs) to advise the court if they have or ever had a protection file concerning you.

## **26. How do I provide the police records check? (Paragraph 16)**

You must provide a police records check that includes more information than just a list of any convictions. The check will be similar to the checks done for people who apply to work or volunteer with children or other potentially vulnerable people.

If within the last 60 days you received a police records check for the purpose of an application for decision-making responsibility by a non-parent:

- attach a copy of that document to your Form 35.1; and
- indicate in paragraph 16 if you have been found guilty of any criminal offences since the record check was produced.

If you do not have a recent police records check for the purpose of an application for decision-making responsibility by a non-parent:

- go to your local police station and tell them that you are applying for an order for decision-making responsibility and need a police check for court;
- make a note of the date you asked for the check; and
- indicate in paragraph 16 what date you asked for the check and the name of the police department.

**Unless you have made arrangements to pick up the police record check, the police will send you a copy. You must serve and file a copy of the report within 10 days of receiving it.**

## **27. What Children's Aid Society information do I have to provide? (Paragraph 18)**

You must ask for a report from every Children's Aid Society (CAS) operating in any place in Ontario where you have lived since you turned 18 or became a parent (whichever came first). Court staff will assist you to determine which CASs you have to request a report from.

The form you will complete will identify the appropriate CASs and authorize those CASs to send the form back to you and the court indicating:

- If they have or had any protection records open in your name;
- When the file or files were opened; and
- When the file or files were closed, if applicable.

**Example: If, as an adult, you have lived in Windsor, Ottawa and Hamilton, you will have to request a report from:**

- The Windsor-Essex Children's Aid Society;
- The Children's Aid Society of Ottawa;
- The Hamilton Children's Aid Society; and
- The Hamilton Catholic Children's Aid Society.

The CASs have 30 days to send a response to you and the court. You can indicate on the form whether you want the CAS to mail or fax the form back to you.

## **28. What kind of information will be included in the CAS report?**

The CAS will only report that they had records relating to you if you were an adult who was:

- the subject of a protection investigation; or
- receiving services from the CAS.

Types of files that will be included in the report include situations where:

- the CAS investigated an allegation of abuse or neglect where you were a parent or caregiver to the child;
- the CAS started a court application involving one or more of your children; or
- one or more of your children were or are in the care of the CAS.

Types of files that will NOT be included in the report include situations where:

- you were a child in the care of a CAS, including if you received continued care and support for youth (formerly known as extended care and maintenance);

- you were the child of a family receiving service from a CAS;
- you were an employee of a CAS;
- you were a foster parent;
- you were a kinship care provider; or
- you adopted a child through the CAS.

**29. What if I don't want the court or other parties to know that I was involved with a CAS? (Paragraph 19)**

Most of the time, the judge will want to know if you were a client of a CAS. You may, however, be able to make a case that the information is not relevant to your current claim for decision-making responsibility and should be kept private.

If a CAS sends you a report that says you have a record with them, and you do not want this information to be shared, you should immediately file a motion with the court asking that the report not be given to the other parties or put in the court file.

You do **not** have to give notice to the other party that you are making this request.

You can use a [Form 14B: Motion Form](#) and include an affidavit ([Form 14A](#)) explaining why you were involved with the CAS and why you do not think this information is relevant to the current case. You should also ask the court to seal your motion material so that it will not be shared with the other party.

**IMPORTANT: This motion must be brought within 20 days of the date the court receives the last CAS report. You will get a notice from the court telling you when they received the last report. If you do not bring a motion within the 20 days, the reports will be shared with the other party and included in the court file.**

**30. Will the court have any other information?**

Court staff will search court records and produce a report indicating if you or the child or children have been involved in any other family court cases. Court staff will give you an associated case list, which will list any family cases involving people with your name.

If the list contains cases that did not involve you, you can swear or affirm an affidavit that says in which cases you were not a party.

The judge can also ask court staff to conduct a search of criminal court files and produce a list of cases involving you or people with your name.

**31. When do I swear the Form 35.1: Affidavit?**

Wait until you have completed all of the paperwork before you swear your Form 35.1. You cannot swear that you have done something before you have done it. (See question 23 for more information on swearing or affirming Form 35.1.)

**It is a criminal offence to knowingly swear or affirm a false affidavit.**

### **Finding the legislation, rules and forms**

Children's Law Reform Act: <https://www.ontario.ca/laws/statute/90c12>

Divorce Act: <https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/d-3.4/FullText.html>

Family Law Rules: <https://www.ontario.ca/laws/regulation/990114>

Court forms: [www.ontariocourtforms.on.ca/english/](http://www.ontariocourtforms.on.ca/english/)

### **Other Information and Resources**

[Checklists for Self-Represented Litigants](#)

[How to file family court documents online](#)

[The Law Society Referral Service](#) (1-800-268-8326) for a free referral to a lawyer in your area.

[Legal Aid Ontario](#) (1-800-668-8258) for summary legal advice and to inquire if you are eligible for a legal aid certificate.

Some lawyers provide "limited scope" services, which means you hire them to help with a specific part of your legal problem (rather than your whole case). The [Family Law Limited Scope Services Project](#) website is a private-bar initiative where you can find a directory of lawyers that offer these services.

[Family mediation services](#) are available and delivered by external fee-for-service providers who have been awarded a contract by the Ministry. You can find contact information for the family mediation and information services in your family court location on the [Ministry of the Attorney General's website](#).

A ten-part [Guide to Procedures in Family Court](#) provides steps to follow when going to court, including which forms must be completed, and how to take steps in court cases. Additional information about family law is available on the [Ministry of the Attorney General's website](#).

You can find more information about family law and the court process at <https://stepstojustice.ca/>.

If you want help completing your court forms, Community Legal Education Ontario, a non-profit organization, has developed a **free online tool** called

[Guided Pathways to Divorce Forms](#) that asks you questions and then puts your answers into the required court forms. When you're finished, you can save or print your completed forms.

[Standard Clauses](#) have been developed to support individuals drafting family court orders. Using the standard clauses assists in interpreting and identifying the intent of an order. In addition, many of the standard clauses are required to ensure proper enforcement of an order.