

# Relationships Australia

NEW SOUTH WALES

Media release

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## Support Available for Separating Families

Support is available for families going through separation and divorce or who need help with parenting arrangements or counselling, Anne Hollonds, Psychologist and Relationships Australia NSW CEO said.

“The breakdown of a relationship is a difficult time for everyone, especially where there are children involved. Parents need to find a way move on from their disagreements with each other and focus on the needs of the children and how best to support them through the changes happening in their family,” Ms Hollonds said.

In the process of a separation, people who wish to resolve disputes in relation to their children are now required to first attend Family Dispute Resolution, and make a genuine effort to resolve their disputes, before they can pursue the matter through the courts. There are some exceptions such as matters involving family violence or child abuse.

Family Dispute Resolution is available through Family Relationship Centres. There are more than 65 Family Relationship Centres nationally, which were established as part of the Australian Government’s major reforms to the Family Law system in 2006. Relationships Australia manages six Family Relationship Centres in NSW.

“Family Dispute Resolution promotes co-operation and improves communication which makes co-parenting easier in the long run. It also helps participants to resolve future disagreements in a positive way,” Ms Hollonds said.

“Exposure to ongoing conflict can be very damaging and has lasting consequences for children. When parents separate children need to feel safe, to feel loved and valued by both parents, to have the opportunity for a positive relationship with each parent if possible, and to not be involved in parental conflict.

“There are different styles of parenting after separation – the best one is where parents are able to reach out and build a bridge between them that supports the needs of their children.

Individual, Couple & Family Counselling, Relationships & Parenting Courses, Post Separation Services, Children’s Contact Services, Family Relationship Centres, Adolescent Services, Family & Workplace Mediation  
Corporate & Business Consultancy, Professional Training & Consultation

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“Family Relationship Centre services or counselling, mediation and education programs through Relationships Australia can help people to move on from feeling angry, overwhelmed or bitter to having a more constructive relationship with their former partner. There is no doubt this is a tough time, though the good news is that there are people who can help you.

“If family members or friends are concerned about how someone is coping with separation or divorce, they should suggest they seek the professional help that is widely available, especially through Family Relationship Centres or Relationships Australia,” Ms Hollonds said.

The contact number for the Family Relationship Advice line is 1800 050 321 or you can go to the Relationships Australia NSW website at [www.nsw.relationships.com.au](http://www.nsw.relationships.com.au).

Relationships Australia services include counselling for individuals couples and families (face-to-face, telephone and online); parenting and relationship education; support for families going through separation; specialist services for people who have left out of home care, refugee families and Aboriginal communities; workplace counselling and training; employee assistance programs and consultancy for companies; and training for family support professionals. Relationships Australia NSW is part of a national network of over 200 centres.

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