

WHAT TO EXPECT ON THE DAY

Each family assessment is different and designed to focus on the questions asked by the Court, based on the family's specific circumstances. There are also different combinations of family members who may be involved. It is therefore hard to predict exactly how long a family assessment will take. The Clinic will try to limit the travel required by scheduling all 'in-person' appointments to occur on a single day. Interviews of children and young adolescents will be scheduled to occur in person wherever possible. The psychologist will also schedule observation sessions for parents (and possibly their new partners) with their children to occur on the same day. Carers may also be asked to participate in a brief observation session.

If there is time available, individual interviews with parents and carers may also take place in person on this day. However, there might also be times when these take place on a different day, via telehealth (online), to ensure that all family members are given enough time to complete their interview, and are not rushed when answering questions and providing information. When attending the Clinic, we suggest planning to be there for an extended period, possibly for the full day. The administration team will be able to advise you of the set up for your particular family leading up the scheduled appointments.



FAMILY ASSESSMENT - PSYCHOLOGY

Children's Court Clinic

Children's Court Clinic

Address: 477 Little Lonsdale St
Melbourne VIC 3000

Directions Details:

The Clinic is located inside the Melbourne Children's Court on the ground floor to the left of the main foyer.

Phone: (03) 8638 3301

Email: clinicappt@courts.vic.gov.au

WHAT IS A PSYCHOLOGIST?

Psychologists are experts in human behaviour. They study how people think, feel, behave and react, using research and scientific knowledge. All psychologists must be registered with the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA), and meet high education, training, ethical and professional standards.

Psychologists at the Children's Court Clinic have undertaken specialised training in at least one area of expertise; clinical, forensic, or educational and developmental psychology. They are trained in the assessment and diagnosis of mental illness, human behaviours and personality, and can identify a range of psychological problems. They can also look at areas that would benefit from support and interventions.

WHAT IS A FAMILY ASSESSMENT?

A family assessment done by the Clinic is an independent assessment requested by the Children's Court, and not any other service.

To do this, the psychologist collects information from family members and relevant services to get a better understanding of how a family is functioning, their strengths and capabilities, as well as identifying areas for further support, particularly in regards to providing safe and appropriate care for their child/children. The Clinic will focus on what is in a child's best interests.



This process usually involves:

- Interviews with adults (such as parents, partners, carers)
- Interviews with the children involved in the Court proceedings
- Gathering information from services involved with family members (such as psychologists, drug and alcohol workers, teachers and support services).

Family members/carers may also be asked to complete questionnaires that assist in gathering information.

This information is used to write a report that provides a detailed summary of the family. It includes their current circumstances, their support needs, and recommendations regarding living arrangements and future contact. It also includes recommendations to promote safety and wellbeing for the child/children, and positive family relationships. The final report is submitted directly to Court.

Please note, a family assessment is not a test. The assessment will mostly involve having a conversation with the psychologist and answering questions about yourself and your experiences. This helps them gain a detailed understanding of your circumstances.

This conversation is likely to include questions about your upbringing, mental and physical health, substance use (if any), previous treatments, relationships and experiences of parenting.

WHAT TO BRING?

We recommend bringing plenty of food, snacks and water for the day. A vending machine is available on level 1 for drinks and small snacks. There are cafes and convenience stores nearby.

It might be helpful to bring in some favourite toys, comforting items and activities to keep children occupied, as there will likely be a lot of waiting between sessions.

SAFETY

The Clinic takes the safety of all family members and staff very seriously. If you have safety concerns for your Clinic assessment, please discuss this with administration staff.

If family members are experiencing conflict or other difficulties, the Clinic can schedule appointments to ensure that individuals do not cross paths whilst attending. Court security are also notified should this be required.