

## **Information for Parents**

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Relationships Australia Qld (RAQ) provides a wide range of services to our community including counselling, education, family support and mediation. We also provide services for children and young people where it is in their best interests, including counselling and support or an assessment by a Child Consultant.

### **Why would my child need to see a Practitioner?**

Like adults, children experience many emotions, challenges, and changes in their lives. They often benefit from being able to talk to someone separate from their peers and family about their feelings and what they are experiencing; someone neutral. The role of the Counsellor or Child Consultant is to listen and help the child process and express their thoughts and feelings in a healthy way.

### **Who would my child be meeting with?**

RAQ has specially trained Practitioners to meet with children and young people. You will usually have the opportunity to meet them first, as they will generally not conduct any session with a child less than 16 years of age until they have met with the child's Parent or Guardian. You will be able to discuss any concerns or questions you have with the Practitioner.

### **Do you need my consent?**

We work with children from 6 years of age and require parental consent to see children aged 15 years and younger. Young people 16 years and older may attend our service without parental consent. As with adults, services for children are voluntary and we will not commence any service without a child's consent.

### **Will you talk to me about what my child says?**

Interactions between the child and the Practitioner are considered private. For many topics the Practitioner will encourage the child to share the discussion with their parents but will come to an agreement with the child about what will be disclosed to their parents or other people outside of the session. The exception to this is where there are concerns about the safety or wellbeing of a child. In that case we are required by law to report matters to the relevant authorities. Wherever possible, this will be discussed with you prior to any report being made.

### **How can I support my child after their session?**

It is normal to want to know how your child is doing and what they are feeling, especially after they have talked with a Practitioner. You can assist your child by allowing them the space to bring up any issues of concern raised in a session in their own time. Sometimes your child will not disclose any details of the session; this is normal, and children should never be quizzed about the details they discussed in services. If your child does share some information with you, you should avoid judging or commenting during the conversation with your child. Listen and provide supportive feedback if appropriate.