

INDEPENDENT FAMILY ADVOCACY AND SUPPORT (IFAS)

A program offered by Victoria Legal Aid (VLA), this service offers non-legal advocacy and support to parents and primary carers who are at the early stages of involvement in the child protection system. IFAS helps parents who need support navigating the child protection system and helps divert families from the court system for child protection matters.

IFAS is an independent, non-judgemental service, which focuses on upholding the rights of primary carers and families, and ensuring that they are able to be active participants in the wellbeing of their family.

IFAS does not offer legal advice, but can help with referrals to legal advice or other support services as required. This service is confidential, free, and voluntary. IFAS advocates respect everybody's individuality and culture and will always work with families to make sure they feel safe and supported.

You may be eligible for this service if you:

- are a primary carer/parent of an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander child OR a primary carer/parent with intellectual disability
- are involved with child protection
- have not been to court due to current issues with child protection (if you have been involved before, IFAS may still be able to support you)
- live or work in Darebin, Moreland, Bendigo or Ballarat.

If you are unsure whether you meet the criteria, please contact IFAS on **1800 849 200**. The phone line is available:

- Monday 9 am to 12 pm
- Wednesday 1 pm to 4 pm
- Friday 9 am to 12 pm.

You can also email IFAScontact@vla.vic.gov.au

FACT SHEETS FOR PARENTS AND PRIMARY CARERS

Visit <https://www.legalaid.vic.gov.au/find-legal-answers/child-protection#factsheets> to download fact sheets that have more information for parents and primary carer who are involved in in the child protection system. These include:

- common questions about child protection involvement, how to get help and what you can do if you're unhappy with a child protection decision
- answers to some common questions about the child protection court process and how to get help
- tips about working with child protection, from advocates and parents who have experience of child protection involvement with their family in the past.