

The Children's Court Advocate Service

Helping children have their voice heard when decisions are being made about their lives.





Sometimes adults need to make important decisions about things like where children live or who they spend time with.

When that happens, it is important that children have a chance to share their thoughts, feelings, wishes and views. We are here to listen and help make sure your voice can be heard.

Who are we?

- We are Children's Court Advocates.
 - Our job is to listen to children and help the Court understand what is important to them.
 - We are independent, which means we do not take sides and we do not work for either parent.
 - We are there to listen to you.
-

What is our Job?

We will:

- ✓ Listen to you.
 - ✓ Get to know you.
 - ✓ Help you understand what is happening.
 - ✓ Answer your questions and explain the court process.
 - ✓ Help you share your thoughts and feelings if you want to.
 - ✓ We are independent which means we do not take sides. We work for you.
 - ✓ Make sure your voice is heard.
-

What will happen?

- First, we will meet with you and explain who we are.
 - We will take our time and go at a pace that feels comfortable for you.
 - We usually meet children two or three times.
 - You can ask questions at any time.
-

REMEMBER

- Your voice matters.
 - Your thoughts matter.
 - Your feelings matter.
 - We are here to listen.
- 

Where will we meet?

- We have rooms with games and activities in our centre to help you feel comfortable and relaxed.
- We can talk to you about meeting somewhere else if this is what you want.

What happens with what I say?

We will explain:

- What information will be shared.
- Who will see it.
- How it will be used.
- We will not change your words.
- We will prepare a report for the Judge explaining your views and wishes.
- The Judge will read the report before making a decision.
- The Judge makes the final decision, but it is important that your views are heard.

Do I have to talk to an Advocate?

No.

- Taking part is your choice.
- You can decide how much you want to say.
- You can ask questions at any time.
- If you decide you do not want to talk to us, we will let the Judge know.
- If you ask, we could arrange for you to meet the Judge.

Important things to know

You are allowed to have your own opinion

You do not have to agree with anyone else

We will listen carefully

There are no right or wrong answers

You will see the same Advocate each time

We will treat you with respect

We will explain things clearly



What Happens Next?

1. An adult makes a referral.
2. We talk to the adults and make arrangements.
3. We meet with you.
4. We listen to your views.
5. We write a report for the Judge about your wishes.
6. We prepare a report for the Court.
- In some cases, additional steps may be considered to further support a child's participation in the process.
7. We can meet with you again to tell you about the Judge's decision if you wish.
8. We can arrange for you to meet with the Judge and support you to do this.

If that happens, we will explain everything clearly and help you understand what to expect.



Childhood Matters

About Childhood Matters

Childhood Matters works with lots of children and young people to help them feel heard, understood and supported.

Helping children feel heard when it matters most.

Children's Court Advocate Pilot Service is a Department of Justice, Home Affairs and Migration initiative delivered by Childhood Matters.



An Roinn Dlí agus Cirt,
Gnóthaí Baile agus Imirce
Department of Justice,
Home Affairs and Migration





Childhood Matters Children's Court Advocate Pilot Service

Visit: www.childhood-matters.ie/childcourtadvocate

Clonmel Office:

Marketplace
Clonmel
Co. Tipperary
E91 N5V9

CCAClonmel@childhood-matters.ie
Telephone: 0526156088

Waterford Office:

48 The Glen
Waterford City
Co. Waterford
X91 HWF9

CCAWaterfordCity@childhood-matters.ie
Telephone: 051267705