



Australian Government
Attorney-General's Department

Is your child at risk of being abducted from Australia?

If you are worried that your child may be abducted overseas by a parent, or another family member, there are some basic steps you can take that can help prevent this. It is extremely important that you act quickly. Counselling support may also be available for you. This brochure will let you know the steps you can take.

What you should do immediately

Make sure you have your child's official documents, including their passport (if they have one) and recent photos of the child and their other parent. You should also note the contact details of family and friends located overseas where the other parent may take your child.

If you are thinking of taking your child overseas

If you are a parent who is considering removing a child from Australia without the other parent's agreement you should think twice. Doing so may constitute a criminal offence punishable by up to three years in prison. If you want to relocate overseas with your child you should seek the other parent's agreement in writing, or seek relocation orders through the Australian Family Law Courts.

Stopping your child leaving Australia

The Australian Federal Police (AFP) can place your child's name on the Airport Watch List, which is a system designed to prevent children whose parents are involved in Family Law proceedings being removed from Australia without the consent of the Court. To place your child's name on this list you will be required to obtain a Court Order or an application for an immediate order to prevent your child being taken from Australia. This will empower the AFP to prevent travel where it may constitute an offence.

You can find out more about the Watch List by looking at the AFP Family Law Kit on the AFP website www.afp.gov.au.

You can apply to the Family Court of Australia, the Federal Magistrates court, or the Family Court of Western Australia for an order placing your child on the Watch List. You will require a court order requesting the AFP to place your child on the Watch List.

You can gain assistance to obtain these orders by contacting a lawyer, community legal centre or legal aid commission. Details on how to contact these organisations, or a private lawyer, can be found at www.accesstojustice.gov.au.

Preventing the issuing of a passport to your child

You can raise a Child Alert Request with the Australian Passport Office of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade. It will warn the department that there may be circumstances that need to be considered before issuing a passport to your child.

You can complete a Child Alert Request (PC9) form online at <https://www.passports.gov.au/Web/ChildAlert.aspx>. The form must be printed and submitted to the Australian Passport Office in hardcopy with your signature.

A Child Alert will not prevent your child from travelling if she/he already holds an Australian passport or a travel document issued by another country. You will need to contact the Embassy, High Commission or Consulate of that country in Australia to find out if you can apply to stop a foreign

passport being issued for your child. Contact details for foreign government representatives in Australia can be found at <http://protocol.dfat.gov.au/Mission/list.rails>.

Contact the Australian Passport Information Service for more information.

Contact details

Australian Federal Police

Phone: Contact the AFP Operations Coordination Centre, Family Law – Airport Watch List Alerts - on (02) 6126 7999.

Website: www.afp.gov.au

Australian Family Law Courts

Phone: Contact the Family Law Courts national enquiry centre on **1300 352 000**.

Website: www.familylawcourts.gov.au

Family Court of Western Australia

Phone: Telephone call centre (08) 9224 8222.

Website: www.familycourt.wa.gov.au

Australian Passport Information Service

Phone: 131 232 – 8 am to 8 pm Monday to Friday, and 8.30 am to 5pm weekends and most public holidays (Australian Eastern Standard Time)

Website: www.passports.gov.au

If your child has already been abducted

Please read the brochure *Has your child been abducted from Australia?* This brochure gives advice on what to do immediately after your child has been abducted and taken overseas. You can read the brochure online www.ag.gov.au/childabduction.

If your child has been taken to a country that is a member of the Hague Child Abduction Convention, or you are unsure where your child may have been taken to, you can apply to the Australian Central Authority for the Hague Convention to have your child returned. Details on how to contact the Australian Central Authority are at the end of this brochure.

If your child has been taken to a country that is not a member of the Hague Child Abduction Convention you may be able to obtain assistance from the Consular Branch of the Department of

Foreign Affairs and Trade. The service operates 24-hours a day and can be contacted on 1300 555 135.

You may also be eligible to apply to the Attorney-General's Department for financial assistance under the Overseas Custody (Child Removal) Scheme to commence legal proceedings in the overseas country for recovery of your child. Further information on this is available at www.ag.gov.au or by calling the Financial Assistance Section on (02) 6141 4770.

What support is available for you?

International child abduction is stressful for everyone involved, and particularly for children. If you are affected by it, you should seek support quickly. The following can provide you with support and assistance:

International Social Service Australia

International Social Service Australia (ISS) is a free service that offers information, advice, support and counselling services for families affected by international child abduction. ISS can also provide you with free assistance to complete an application under the Hague Convention.

ISS can also help with contact between parents and children across international borders, including mediation and assistance with reunification and returns.

Family Relationship Advice Line

The Family Relationship Advice Line is a national telephone service established to support families affected by relationship or separation issues. The Advice Line provides information on family relationship issues and advice on parenting arrangements after separation. It can also refer callers to local support services.

Family Relationships Online

Family Relationships Online provides information about family relationships and separation. It also lists services that can help parents manage relationship issues, including agreeing on appropriate arrangements for children after they separate.

Contact details

International Social Service Australia

Phone: 1300 657 843

Website: www.iss.org.au

Family Relationship Advice Line

Phone: 1800 050 321 – open from 8 am to 8 pm, Monday to Friday, and 10 am to 4 pm on Saturday (local time), except national public holidays

Family Relationships Online

Website: www.familyrelationships.gov.au

About the Australian Central Authority

The Australian Central Authority is a unit within the Federal Attorney-General's Department and is responsible for administering the 1980 Hague *Convention on the Civil Aspects of International Child Abduction*. The Convention is a multilateral treaty in force between Australia and a large number of other countries. It provides a lawful procedure for seeking the return of abducted children to their home country. It also provides assistance to parents to obtain contact or access to children overseas.

The Australian Central Authority will:

- Provide you with basic information on how the Convention works
- Assess applications under the Convention, and if accepted, make requests to the Central Authority of the country where a child is located to take action to secure the return of a child to Australia, or to secure access to that child
- Be your point of contact with the country where your child is and provide regular liaison with the Central Authority in that country, and
- Refer you to other organisations for more information or support.

Contact details

Website: <http://www.ag.gov.au/childabduction>

Email: CentralAuthority@ag.gov.au

Phone: 1800 100 480