



## Cafcass Family Forum top tips for parents working with the Children's Guardian in public law proceedings.

The Family Forum is a group of parents, carers and extended family members who have had direct experience of private law or public law proceedings. Cafcass established this group in September 2021 to listen to adults with experience of proceedings and to use their feedback to improve its work. These Top Tips are based on the experiences of Family Forum members, who offer advice to parents on how to work in partnership with the Children's Guardian.

1

The professionals working with your family will be trying to make the best and safest recommendations to the family court for your child/ren. It is important to work with all the professionals involved including the Children's Guardian. The court proceedings are very serious and you are likely to be worried about what is going to happen to you and to your child/ren. Our job is to make sure that you understand what is happening for your child/ren and why it is happening now.

2

When attending court hearings or meetings with professionals, you may find it useful to write things down so that you don't forget. Don't be afraid to ask any questions that make things clearer to you.

3

If the factual information (information relating to facts and not professional judgement) written about you is not correct, let the Children's Guardian know. They will correct the information.

4

It is important for the Children's Guardian to work with **all** significant adults (parents, carers and other adults who know your child/ren) so that your child/ren's best interests and experiences are well understood.

5

To understand what is special and unique about your child/ren, the Children's Guardian will want to talk to the important people in your child's life. This could include extended family members and professionals who know you and your children.

6

Be open and honest about what is working in your family and what isn't. The Children's Guardian will need to understand what is happening to your child/ren and what you think is necessary to protect your child/ren. Please communicate with the Children's Guardian. They want to work with you so that your children's futures are the best that they can be.

7

If you think you have a support need, tell the Children's Guardian and they will try to help. It is very important that you understand what is happening in proceedings and what the Children's Guardian is going to recommend to the court. Make sure you ask about these things and if you don't understand, don't be afraid to ask again.

8

Don't be afraid to give feedback to the Children's Guardian. Every family who has experienced our service is encouraged to provide feedback. Tell us (verbally, write to us or through a feedback form) about your experience with us, what has worked, what hasn't and what we could do better.