



CAFCASS URGES PARENTS TO LISTEN TO CHILDREN CAUGHT IN THE MIDDLE

Cafcass, the organisation that looks after children's interests in the family courts, is organising a conference 'How it looks to me' to ask children about their experiences of divorce and separation.

The conference, which is being held at Leicester Space Centre on Wednesday 15th April 2009 between 10am and 4pm, will help Cafcass write a report on children's experiences of family breakdown. Sometimes children and young people can be caught in the middle. This conference aims to put children's voices first.

Cafcass Children's Rights Director, Christine Smart, says, "We will have over 150 children and young people present who will tell us what help they need to cope when parents separate. The report we produce will help Cafcass shape the services we provide when working with the 80,000 children we see each year."

INTERVIEWS AVAILABLE WITH YOUNG PEOPLE AND CAFCASS STAFF

Media are welcome to attend the event but please contact Takki Sulaiman on 07778 419218 in the first instance. For more information visit http://www.cafcass.gov.uk/news/2009/how_it_looks_to_me.aspx

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Notes for Editors:

- The Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass) was formed as a new service for England and Wales on 1 April 2001 as part of the Government's commitment to supporting families and children. It brought together the services previously provided by the Family Court Welfare Service, the Guardian ad Litem Services and the Children's divisions of the Official Solicitor's Office.
- Cafcass has a statutory responsibility to ensure that children and young people are put first in family proceedings, that their voices are heard, the decisions made about them by courts are in their best interests and that they and their families are supported throughout the process. We operate within the law set by Parliament and under the rules and directions of the family courts.
- Cafcass' role is to work with Children and Families in the family courts. The following list provides some examples of the types of cases we work with:-
 - Adoption (public law)
 - Care Orders (public law)
 - Emergency Protection Orders (public law)
 - Residency and contact following divorce and separation (private law)

Consulting with Children

'How it looks to me'

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- Cafcass is sponsored by the Department for Children, Schools and Families and is a non-departmental public body.
- For the year 2007-2008 CAF/CASS promoted the interests of 77,134 children. This does not factor in the work we do with children and their families in dispute resolution and our support of contact centres.
- Cafcass has established a Young People's Board who have experience of our services. They advise us on matters of policy and practice.
- Cafcass' National Standards and other publications including our annual report are available for download at our new website www.cafcass.gov.uk
- For 2009-11 Cafcass is implementing a major practice improvement programme to improve the quality and consistency of frontline practice.

For further information:

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