

# Explaining CISS to children, young people, parents and carers

In order to maintain open and transparent relationships, it is best practice to explain the Child Information Sharing Scheme (CISS) with families when it is safe, reasonable and appropriate to do so. If you are unable to have these conversations, provisions under CISS mean that information can still be shared.

This information sheet can be used as a guide to help you to explain CISS to families and let them know that consent is not required from them to share information as part of the Scheme. Allow for an open conversation and answer any questions or concerns they may have.

The following resources have been developed by the Victorian Government to assist with discussing CISS with parents, carers and young people:

- [Tips for a conversation with a child and/or their parent about information sharing](#) - Conversation prompts to discuss CISS and FVISS with children and parents including general information, consent, providing reassurance and promoting understanding.
- [Child Information Sharing Flyer](#) - A short document that can be provided to carers, alongside your explanation, in helping them to understand what CISS is about.
- [Child Information Sharing Factsheet](#) - A user-friendly detailed flyer, including a case example of the use of CISS, that can be provided to caregivers, alongside your conversation of CISS with them.
- [Child Information Sharing Flyer \(Indigenous\)](#) - A one-page flyer that can help you explain CISS to Indigenous parents or carers and that they can take away with them.
- [Child Information Sharing Factsheet \(Indigenous\)](#) - This factsheet is helpful when explaining CISS to First Nations carers or to carers of First Nations children.
- [Child Information Sharing Factsheets in 20 community languages](#) - These resources support conversations with families, carers, children and young people from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds.

You can download and print these flyers and factsheets to support family conversations. There are also [videos](#) from prominent educators that you can refer to, which explain how CISS is supporting child wellbeing and safety.

At times, practitioners may also want to explain CISS to children or young people (if it is safe, reasonable and appropriate to do so). For example, children and young people in out-of-home care may confide in a worker and be confused or feel misled to find their information has been shared with other service providers. Explaining CISS will keep the child or young person informed and aim to maintain an open trusting relationship with their case manager and others they interact with.

Explaining CISS in these circumstances will rely on practitioner discretion in terms of the age and understanding of the child or young person, as well as the purpose for making them aware of the scheme. It is also important to consider whether explaining CISS risks the child or young person disengaging from

# Explaining CISS to children, young people, parents and carers

services. Professionals should continue to share information whether they have had a conversation about CISS with the child/young person or not.

The accompanying Child Information Sharing Scheme visual can be used to assist in explaining CISS to a child or young person if it is safe, reasonable and appropriate to do so. The visual can also be used to explain CISS to parents or carers who do not speak English, where a cognitive impairment is present, or where capacity is impaired for any reason. The visual shows a child at the centre with services positioned around them, demonstrating the relationship each service has with the child, but also that to provide the best support professionals and services need to work together.

Child focused work means that children feel listened to and empowered. If appropriate, it is good practice to involve children or young people in meaningful conversation about information sharing.



## Some ways to start a conversation with children and young people about information sharing

- People in your life want you to be happy and safe. This picture shows some of those people who sometimes talk to each other and share information to support you.
- This picture shows some of the people who can support you, and to do that they need to talk to each other about how they can do this.
- By sharing the right types of information, we can involve the right people who can help to keep you happy and safe in your life.
- By sharing your information, it helps the adults who support you to work together.
- Is there anything you want me and the other services to know or understand?

Information sharing means...

- sharing your story, so you don't have to keep re-telling it over and over again.
- sharing your story so others will better understand you and what you want or need.
- talking to the adults around you about how to best to support you when you need it.
- talking to someone who can provide you with the help you need.

# HOW DO the PEOPLE in MY LIFE KEEP ME HAPPY & SAFE ???



ILLUSTRATION by DEBBIE WOOD on  
WURUNDJERI COUNTRY

The CFECFW Pilot Program was supported by the Victorian Government under the Child Information Sharing Capacity Building Grants Program