

Parent Responsibility Contract

A Parent Responsibility Contract (PRC) is a voluntary agreement between a parent, primary care giver or expectant parent (parent) and Department of Communities and Justice (DCJ) which aims to improve parenting skills with a primary goal of keeping a child or young person (child) at home (preservation) with their parents. PRC's provide an opportunity to be clear about what needs to change and who will do what (including DCJ) to support this change.

A PRC may be used when DCJ has concerns for a child due to the actions or inactions of the parents which can be alleviated by the parents agreeing to do things, or not do things or to engage with support services. Support services can include drug and alcohol counselling or rehabilitation, family violence counselling and support, parenting classes or trauma related counselling.

A PRC can be registered with the Children's Court.

A PRC cannot make provisions for parental responsibility for the child to be allocated to someone else and it cannot be used to change where the child usually lives or to place the child in out of home care.

A PRC will include details of what each party agrees to do, including what DCJ will do during the Agreement.

A PRC should not be entered into by a parent or primary care giver unless they have had the opportunity to seek independent advice about it.

While a PRC is in place, Permanency Support Program (PSP) service providers will support the parents and will encourage them to meet their agreements. PSP service providers might make referrals for parents to help them achieve the objectives and to assist with the promotion of positive parenting and to facilitate change that will keep the child safe.

If the parent or caregiver is not meeting their obligations under the PRC, PSP Service Providers will notify DCJ. DCJ may make a decision to file a breach notice. The contract breach notice will be filed along with a care application to the Children's Court. The PRC can be used as evidence in Children's Court matters.

PRC are voluntary agreements designed to increase safety for children so they can live at home

When are Parent Responsibility Contracts used?

PRC are used when a safety assessment has been completed and the child's permanency goal is preservation.

PRC can be used when the goals of a case plan are not being achieved and it's agreed that a more formal arrangement will help the parents take greater responsibility for ensuring their child's safety.

PRCs can be used when there are concerns about an unborn child and the PRC is put in place for the expectant parent to work towards goals to reduce risks after the child is born.

The PRC cannot be used if the person has been a party to another PRC in the last 18 months.

The maximum term of a PRC is 12 months.

How is a Parent Responsibility Contract Developed?

No PRC will be the same, because they are tailored to address the issues that are impacting parenting for individual people and families. Each contract is developed individually in close collaboration with the parent. The contract is designed to support and address the family's specific needs.

PRC contain the following information:

- why the PRC is being developed?
- concerns written in the parents own words

- the actions and goals that the parent or caregiver will need to accomplish and work towards for the child to stay in their care.

After a PRC is developed, a case meeting must be organised with service providers and other key players such as representatives from treatment programs or parenting services so that all services involved with a parent can work together to provide tailored and comprehensive supports.

Please see [Common Orders in Child Protection](#) and [General Court Terms and Definitions](#) factsheets for more information.

References

NSW Communities and Justice. (n.d). *Parent Responsibility Contracts*.
<<https://www.facs.nsw.gov.au/families/caseworker-visits/child-not-at-risk/chapters/prc>>