WHAT TO EXPECT – FAMILY REPORTS

A Family Report might be asked for or agreed to at nearly any stage in a family law matter, including before beginning proceedings in Court, or after an initial report.

There are a few types of 'reports' that may be referred to as Family Reports, these are:

1. A Short-Form Family Report;
2. A Child Impact Report;
3. A Family Report; and
4. An Updating or Addendum Family Report.

It is normal to feel nervous before you or your children speak with a report writer, or to be concerned about what you should or should not say, and what impact these interviews might have on the outcome of your case.

A Family Report will not dictate a judicial officer's decision, but they can give it significant weight.

This is why it can be a very positive opportunity for you and your children to put forward your views and concerns and experiences (in addition to what is already in your affidavit and other Court documents) in your own words and more directly.

What is important to bear in mind though is that the recommendations that the Report Writer provides are intended to be 'future-focused', so in your discussion with them it is more helpful to focus on the Orders you are seeking now, and on what positive frameworks can be put in place to help and support your children, rather than focusing on what has happened in the past, or on criticising the other party.

When you are attending the interviews it is a good idea to present yourself neatly but in a way that still feels comfortable, and depending on your children's ages, it can be a good idea to bring some snacks and activities with you, to demonstrate your familiarity with what they enjoy, and so that your interactions during the observation might be a bit more natural.

If you have any questions or concerns either before or after the interviews or report release, please contact us.