



Provincial Court of British Columbia

The Court helps settle disputes, including financial support and parenting issues when families separate, and it hears child protection cases.

Should you be in Provincial Court?

Under the *Child, Family and Community Service Act* all child protection matters are dealt with in the Provincial Court. The exception is that protective intervention orders and restraining orders can also be obtained in the BC Supreme Court.

Under the *Family Law Act* the Provincial Court and the BC Supreme Court can make orders about guardianship, parenting arrangements, child support, spousal support and ownership of a companion animal.

The BC Supreme Court has exclusive jurisdiction to make orders about divorce and division of a family's property and debt. Also, once the Supreme Court has made an order about a particular issue, applications to change the order must be taken there.

[Information about Provincial Family Court and BC Supreme Court \(Legal Aid BC\)](#)

Family legislation and rules

[Links to the *Family Law Act*, the *Child, Family and Community Service Act*, the *Provincial Court Family Rules* and other family legislation.](#)

Methods of appearance in family cases

Family cases involve different stages and types of court appearances. You are required to attend some court appearances in person. For others, you attend remotely by telephone or video conference, or there may be a choice as to whether to attend in person or remotely.

The Court's FAM 11 and FAM 12 practice directions describe the default methods for court appearances (in person, videoconference, audioconference, or hybrid) under the *Provincial Court Family Rules* and the *Provincial Court (Child, Family and Community Service Act) Rules*.

[FAM 11 Default Method of Attendance for Court Appearances Under the Provincial Court Family Rules](#)

[FAM 12 Default Method of Attendance for Court Appearances Under the Provincial Court \(CFCSA\) Rules](#)

[Attending a court case](#)

Terms used in family cases

You may hear unfamiliar legal words and acronyms in family court documents and proceedings. Many of these are explained on the "Glossary and court jargon" page. This page also contains links to other helpful glossaries and guides.

[Glossary and court jargon](#)

Resources to help you with family disputes

The Family Justice Services Division (FJSD) of the BC Ministry of Attorney General provides services to help separating and divorcing families resolve their disputes at Family Justice Centres (FJCs) and Justice Access Centres (JACs) around the province. They can provide information about family law issues, offer free online Parenting After Separation courses, provide mediation services, assist with child and spousal support matters and help to prepare Provincial Court documents.

The Child and Youth Legal Centre provides legal representation, free to those who qualify, for young people who are experiencing problems related to family law, child protection, human rights and many other legal issues.

Steps required before filing some *Family Law Act* applications

Depending on the courthouse where your family case is being dealt with, there are different requirements that must be completed before you can move forward with some court applications about family law issues. The information below provides key requirements at different courthouses.

In cases where children are involved, the person starting the process must file their application in the court registry that is closest to where the children live most of the time. If there are no children involved, the person starting the process files their application in the court registry closest to where they live.

Surrey, Victoria and Port Coquitlam

Surrey, Victoria and Port Coquitlam are early resolution registries. In Early Resolution Registries you must complete the following requirements before you can file an application about a family law matter:

- File a *Notice to Resolve a Family Law Matter Form 1*
- Provide a copy of the *Notice to Resolve* to each other party
- Participate in a needs assessment under rule 16
- Parenting After Separation online course, if applicable
- Consensual dispute resolution session, if appropriate

[Notice to Resolve a Family Law Matter Form 1](#)

[Family Law Process Early Resolution Registries PDF brochure\(Government of BC\)](#)

[Early Resolution Process \(Government of BC\)](#)

[Early Resolution Registries \(Legal Aid BC\)](#)

Kelowna, Nanaimo and Vancouver

Kelowna, Nanaimo and Vancouver are family justice registries. In family justice registries you must complete a needs assessment with a family justice counsellor and a Parenting After Separation course before your first court date (a Family Management Conference) will be scheduled.

[Family Justice Registries brochure \(Government of BC\)](#)

[Family Justice Registries \(Legal Aid BC\)](#)

All other BC Provincial Court registries

All registries except Kelowna, Nanaimo, Surrey, Vancouver, Victoria and Port Coquitlam are parenting education program registries. In Parenting Education Program Registries, depending on your type of case, you must complete a Parenting After Separation course before your first court date (a Family Management Conference) will be scheduled.

[Do I have to take a Parenting After Separation course? \(Government of BC\)](#)

[Parenting Education Program Registries \(Legal Aid BC\)](#)

These requirements do not apply to applications for orders such as protection orders, priority parenting matters, relocation, enforcement, case management and consent orders.

[Family Justice Centres \(Government of BC\)](#)

[Justice Access Centres \(Government of BC\)](#)

[Family Justice Counsellors \(Government of BC\)](#)

[Parenting After Separation courses \(Government of BC\)](#)

Notices, policies, practice directions

Find notices (including Notice 28 Current Court Operations), policies and family practice directions.



Family Forms

Family forms and information guides to help you complete your forms. (Government of BC)



Finding a lawyer or getting legal advice

Information about getting a lawyer, what duty counsel do, how to get legal advice and legal assistance.



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