The Family Advocate deals with disputes between parents or parties over access to, and care of, their child/children.

Did you know?

- The Family Advocate mediates during a divorce to protect the rights of children whose custody is in dispute.
- You can also approach the Family Advocate if you have a child/children out of wedlock and you want to make a legal arrangement to access the child/children.
- The Family Advocate can intervene in a case where a child/children is removed from the country by one parent without the permission of the other.

The service of the Family Advocate is available to the public free of charge.
You are in a dispute regarding contact or care of a child.

You want to draft and/or register a parental rights and responsibilities agreement. This is a legal agreement made by both parents/parties regarding the care of their child which can be registered with the Family Advocate.

You want to amend or terminate a parental rights and responsibility agreement registered with the Family Advocate.

There is a dispute on whether a father of a child born out of wedlock satisfies the requirements to acquire full parental rights and responsibilities in terms of the law.

A court has made an order that the Family Advocate has to conduct an inquiry on the best interests of the child.

If the parents/parties reach agreement on the care and contact of their children, the matter does not proceed to court, thereby saving legal costs and time.

Courts will not readily issue a decree of divorce where there is a dispute regarding minor children without the report or recommendations of the Family Advocate.

The Family Advocate can amend or terminate parental rights and responsibilities agreements registered by the Family Advocate’s office. This means that the parents/parties do not have to go to court if they want to amend the agreement when the need arises.

Parental rights and responsibilities agreements or parenting plans registered with the Family Advocate have the same legal effect as a court order.

Courts or Judicial officers are required by law to consider the report and/or recommendations of the Family Advocate when making a decision in the best interests of a minor child.

Parents are expected to:

- Take care of their child/children.
- Maintain contact with their child/children.
- Act as a guardian to their child/children.
- Provide financial support to their child/children.
- Provide for the needs of their child/children.

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