

Preparing for the hearings

See the sections below about preparing for hearings:

Before the hearing begins

The court room

Behaviour in court

Rules

Before the hearing begins

- Make sure you take pens, writing paper and if a financial case, a calculator with you.
- Make notes when you are in the hearing.
- Get to the court at least 15 minutes before any hearing so that you will be calm and not feel rushed.
- Arriving early means you can try and speak with the other party or if they have a lawyer, their lawyer. Sometimes you may be able to agree matters or at least agree what should happen up until (in the interim) the final hearing.
- When you arrive, go to the reception area. Give the receptionist your name and say if you have a lawyer or a [McKenzie Friend](#) with you.
- You will be asked to wait. If there are other cases before yours, there can be delays.
- The receptionist will tell you when to go into the court room.

The court room

- The family court room is set out so you do not sit opposite the other party. However if the family court is busy, you may have to go to another court room.

Behaviour in court

- When the Registrar enters the court stand up and sit down when she/he sits.
- You should call the Registrar “madam” or “sir” if a male Registrar.
- Dress appropriately for court. This means wear a suit or smart casual clothing.
- Keep calm. Attending court can be stressful and emotional particularly in family disputes.
- Treat other people with dignity and respect. Do not talk over other people.
- The Registrar may adjourn (postpone) the case so that you and the other party can try mediation.

Rules

The relevant rules are on the court service website:

[Children Rules 2005](#) for children cases

[Matrimonial Causes Rules 2005](#) for divorce/ judicial separation/nullity cases

[Civil Partnership Causes Rules 2012](#) for civil partnership cases