

Legislative Council

Thursday, 11 November 2010, Page 1518

FAMILIES SA

In reply to the Hon. A. BRESSINGTON (20 July 2010).

The Hon. G.E. GAGO (Minister for State/Local Government Relations, Minister for the Status of Women, Minister for Consumer Affairs, Minister for Government Enterprises, Minister for the City of Adelaide): The Minister for Families and Communities has provided the following information:

1.The mother's contact with her son has not been suspended and the decision to change the arrangement from non-supervised to supervised contact was not precipitated by the comments made by Hon Ann Bressington in Parliament on 20 July 2010, but rather as a response to the negative impact that unsupervised access has been having on the child's emotional well being.

Since March 2010, Families SA have been considering options regarding the child's contact with his mother.

All decisions regarding the proposal to change contact arrangements have occurred in consultation with senior Families SA staff.

2.Families SA continues to meet regularly with the Hon Ann Bressington and discuss the situation with regard to this young person. On 13 September 2010, the Executive Director, Families SA met with the Hon Ann Bressington to discuss the issues pertaining to this boy's care. Families SA are aware of the key issues regarding schooling and contact with his mother and are continuing to progress the case as a priority and provide updates to the Hon Ann Bressington.

3.Families SA regret that a staff member did instruct the mother not to attend (at the time) her son's forthcoming Youth Court proceedings. Families SA acknowledge that this advice to the mother was incorrect and inappropriate. The staff member has been counselled about this matter.

Families SA acknowledge that this kind of direction to a parent is not appropriate and that Families SA is unable to assert to the Courts who can and cannot attend judicial proceedings.

Families SA remained concerned about the possible adverse impact of the mother attending the court hearing and have asserted this to the Courts. The Courts have however supported the mother's attendance. She has since attended all of the young person's Court hearings.

4.With respect to this case I can confirm that this child is under the Guardianship of the Minister and resides in residential care.

Specific details regarding this child's situation remain confidential in accordance with section 58(1) of the *Children's Protection Act 1993*. Families SA is required to maintain the confidentiality of any child who is placed with Families SA under the Guardianship of the Minister. For this reason it is not possible to answer in full every question addressed to me about this case. This serves to protect information about children or others who may already have suffered trauma, deprivation and abuse.