

Understanding and Working with the Child

The psychological foundations and practical skills for Family Court work

Child interviewing skills, tools for understanding views and behaviour, and frameworks for safety and contact decisions.

1 Day

In-person workshop

Manual + Toolkit

Course manual & practice toolkit

90 Min

Follow-up group consultation

FOCUS

The focus is the **child in context**: how development, attachment, relationships, culture and family experiences shape their communication, behaviour and needs.

What You Will Learn

Through demonstrations, exercises and Family Court scenarios, you will learn to:

- 01 Apply child development to your work.** Consider what children can understand, communicate and manage at different developmental stages, and adjust your expectations accordingly.
- 02 Engage and interview children.** Build rapport, explain your role and ask questions without suggesting answers. Use observation and creative techniques, adapting to children who are reluctant, distressed or have different communication needs, including neurodivergent children.
- 03 Explore children's views.** Understand what their preferences mean to them and how their experiences and relationships may inform those views, while representing their views accurately.
- 04 Make sense of behaviour and distress.** Consider different explanations for avoidance, strong preferences and changing accounts. Distinguish what you observe from what you infer, and identify what needs further exploration.
- 05 Recognise vulnerability and risk.** Consider the effects of trauma, family violence and individual vulnerabilities, including when concerns require further information or specialist input.
- 06 Inform decisions about safety, care and contact.** Examine proposed arrangements in light of the child's developmental needs and relationships, what they may be able to manage, and what support or protective measures may be required.

Resources & Ongoing Support

Resources for use in practice

The course manual includes developmental reference guides, interviewing and creative tools, structured approaches to exploring views, and frameworks for testing explanations and considering care and contact arrangements.

Follow-up consultation

Four weeks later, we meet on Zoom for a 90-minute group consultation. We will use the course tools to discuss your questions, anonymised cases and any difficulties encountered while putting the learning into practice.

Who Should Attend

AUDIENCE

For Lawyer for Child, lawyers for parties, psychologists, child-voice practitioners and other professionals working with children in Family Court.

Bring a psychological lens to your Family Court practice.

www.psychlens.co.nz

This is psychology-informed professional education. It does not extend participants' professional scope of practice or qualify non-psychologists to undertake psychological assessment, diagnosis or psychological testing.