

# Overview

## *The Family Court*

**T**he Family Court deals with  
many family law matters in

*the Antigonish, Pictou/New Glasgow,*

*Truro, Amherst, Kentville,*

*Bridgewater, and Yarmouth/Digby*

*Justice Centre areas.*

*The Court and its services give people*

*the opportunity to resolve family*

*conflicts—in or out of the courtroom.*

### Services at the Family Court

- referrals to mediation services
- parent information sessions—  
available in Pictou/New Glasgow,  
Antigonish, Amherst, Kentville,  
Bridgewater, and Truro
- information about court procedures  
and processes

Your first contact with the Family Court will likely be by telephone or with the counter staff at the court. They will provide you with the forms which you need to complete for your application and make an appointment for you to see an intake officer. The intake officer helps determine which programs or services will address your situation. The court will require the applicant and respondent to exchange appropriate information to properly address the issues that have been identified.

### Do I need a lawyer?

We strongly recommend that you have a lawyer to represent you in your case at the Family Court. If you cannot afford a lawyer, you can apply for and may be able to get help from your local legal aid office. You can also obtain free legal information from the Legal Information Society of Nova Scotia (see your telephone directory).

You should get legal advice at each stage of the process.

### What family conflicts does the Court deal with?

The Family Court has the authority to deal with the law in these statutes:

- Young Persons' Summary Proceedings Act
- Children and Family Services Act
- Maintenance and Custody Act
- Maintenance Enforcement Act
- Interjurisdictional Support Orders Act
- Reciprocal Enforcement of Custody Orders Act

- Adult Protection Act
- Criminal Code of Canada, Sections 264.1, 265, 810 and 811 which deal with threats and common assaults involving husband and wife or parent and child, and peace bonds
- The Solemnization of Marriage Act relating to the performance of marriage and applications from persons under the age of 16 who desire permission to marry

Family Court judges are also appointed as judges of Youth Court, and deal with offences under the federal Youth Criminal Justice Act.

A considerable amount of family law is also contained in written decisions of judges, known as “case law.”

## What family conflicts doesn't the Court deal with?

Family Court does not deal with adoptions, divorces, or disputes concerning family property or estates. These disputes are taken to the Supreme Court of Nova Scotia. Applications for changes to orders made under the Divorce Act, called divorce variations, are normally taken to the Supreme Court.

## Where can I get more information?

For more information about representing yourself in court visit the Department of Justice website at

<[www.gov.ns.ca/just/repselfmain.htm](http://www.gov.ns.ca/just/repselfmain.htm)>.

For more information about the courts of Nova Scotia go to <[www.courts.ns.ca](http://www.courts.ns.ca)>.

## Locations

You will find the Family Courts in the following locations:

### Amherst

16 Church Street  
3rd Floor  
Amherst, NS B4H 3A6  
Phone: 667-2256  
Fax: 667-1108

### Antigonish

11 James Street  
Antigonish, NS B2G 1R6  
Phone: 863-7312  
Fax: 863-7479

### Bridgewater

599 King Street  
Bridgewater, NS B4V 1B3  
Phone: 543-4679  
Fax: 543-0678

### Kentville

136 Exhibition Street  
Kentville, NS B4N 4E5  
Phone: 679-6075  
Fax: 679-6081

### Pictou/New Glasgow

69 Water Street  
Pictou, NS B0K 1H0  
Phone: 485-7025  
Fax: 485-8934

### Truro

540 Prince Street  
Truro, NS B2N 1G1  
Phone: 893-5840  
Fax: 893-6261

### Yarmouth/Digby

403 Main Street, Court House  
Yarmouth, NS B5A 1G3  
Phone: 742-0550  
Fax: 742-0678

Some justice centres have satellite courts in other locations in their area. For example, the Truro Justice Centre has a satellite court in Shubenacadie. Kentville Justice Centre has satellite courts in Annapolis Royal and Windsor. Consult your justice centre if you have questions about where to attend the Family Court for appointments with court officers and hearings.