



Tattooing or branding a child

Frequently Asked Questions for Parents

Section 103 Children and Community Services Act 2004

What age can my child have a tattoo or branding?

A child younger than 16 years of age cannot have a tattoo or branding on any part of their body. Any person who tattoos or brands a child under the age of 16 years may be fined \$12,000 and imprisoned for one year under s.103(1) of the *Children and Community Services Act 2004* (the Act).

A child who is 16 years of age or older must have the written consent of a parent to obtain a tattoo or branding. The written consent must include:

- a description of the type of tattoo or brand approved by the parent; and
- stipulate where the tattoo or brand is to be placed on the child's body.

Under s.103(2) of the Act, any person who tattoos or brands a child aged 16 years or older without written parental consent may be fined \$12,000 and imprisoned for one year.

Section 103 of the Act does not apply to tattooing or branding carried out for a medical or therapeutic purpose.

What factors should I consider when deciding whether to give written consent for my child to have a tattoo or branding?

A range of factors should be considered when deciding whether to give your consent to your child for a tattoo or branding. These include:

- What type of tattoo or brand do they want?
- What part of the body do they want tattooed or branded?
- Why do they want a tattoo or branding?
- Do they appreciate the permanency of tattoos and the potential for long term health, social and employment impacts?
- Is there a likelihood they will go somewhere unsafe?
- What are the associated health risks?
- How will aftercare be managed?

It is recommended that you discuss these questions with your child and explain the reasons behind your decision.

More information about the potential health risks associated with tattoos and brandings can be found on the Department of Health – Body Art page:

http://www.healthywa.wa.gov.au/Healthy-WA/Articles/A_E/Body-art.

How do I give consent for my child to be tattooed or branded?

If your child is 16 years of age or older, a pro-forma consent form is available from the Department for Child Protection and Family Support's website at www.childprotection.wa.gov.au, or you can use the tattoo business' own pro-forma consent form.

You must describe the type of tattoo you are giving your approval for, and where it is to be located on the child's body.

You may also wish to accompany your child when he or she is having the tattoo or branding to make sure that they understand the risks involved and aftercare management of their tattoo or branding.

What if I discover that my child has had a tattoo or branding without my consent?

If you become aware that your child has had a tattoo or branding without your consent, please contact the business or person who tattooed or branded the child to check whether written consent was obtained. If you are not satisfied with the response, please contact the Department for Child Protection and Family Support on (08) 9222 2555.

Further information or concerns about tattooing or branding of a child.

If you would like more information or have any concerns about the tattooing or branding of a child, please contact the Department for Child Protection and Family Support on (08) 9222 2555.

