



CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

PURPOSE:

To provide the Day Care Service and Educators with a clear understanding of their role and legal obligations in terms of child protection, as well as, the appropriate procedures for disclosures and suspected risk to a child or children.

SCOPE:

This policy applies to all Day Care Educators

PRINCIPLE:

The Approved provider of an education and care service has the responsibility to ensure all staff maintain up to date knowledge of child protection including their roles and responsibilities as mandatory reporters. The nominated supervisor of this day care has to ensure policies and procedures are in place in relation to child protection. The nominated supervisor must take reasonable steps to ensure the policies and procedures are followed and made available for inspection or at request.

POLICY:

An approved provider must ensure that all Educators are aware of the current child protection law in their jurisdiction and understand their obligations under that law.

PHILOSOPHY:

Every child has a right to be cared and educated in a safe, secure and nurturing environment where their physical, emotional and spiritual needs are met by the educator of each small group. We make every effort to empathise with a child who has a concern and to try and see it from their viewpoint, remembering they are a vulnerable little person, unable to defend themselves from those bigger than themselves. The child is our primary concern and we seek to protect the child from abuse by reporting anyone deemed to be violating a child's human and civil rights.

PROCEDURES:

1. Child protection training, in line with recognized authorities, will be undertaken by Educators to become aware of their responsibilities as mandatory reports of significant harm to children. *What is meant by "significant" in the phrase "to a significant extent" is that which is sufficiently serious to warrant a response by a statutory authority'*
2. If a child discloses to an educator they should not question the child, or take visual images or investigate the suspicion themselves. They are to provide a supportive environment for the child to openly discuss their concern without interruption, prompting or questioning.

Policies in this section as required by:

Children (Education and Care Services National Law Application)Act, No104, 2010

Section: Section 3(2)(a) and (3)(a); 165; 166; 167; 170; 171; 174(2); 189

Education and Care Services National Regulations, 2011

'Regulations': 76; 84; 85; 86; 99; 161; 162; 163; 164; 165; 166; 168; 169 (2)(e) (f)

National Quality Standards for Early Childhood Education and Care , 2011

Standard 2.3; 5.1; 5.2; 7.3.

DATE FOR REVIEW: JULY 2017

Supporting documents &

Agencies: Keep Them Safe: A shared approach to child wellbeing—NSW Government www.keepthemsafe.nsw.gov.au

Support agencies provide training opportunities to services dealing with child protection issues and will be used to assist training of staff.

3. As soon as practicable, after the disclosure the educator should document what they have heard, saw or are aware of in relation to the concern of abuse from the child.
4. Educators must not discuss the allegation with the alleged perpetrator or any other person outside the reporting structure.
5. Educators, as mandatory reporters, are encouraged to use the Mandatory Reporter Guide as soon as possible after the disclosure or being aware of an abuse. To assist their decision making and determine whether or not to report to the Child Protection Helpline. This is found on the link http://www.community.nsw.gov.au/kts/guidelines/documents/mandatory_reporter_guide.pdf
If significant harm is indicated after following the steps in the Guide, educators should contact the Child Protection Helpline by telephoning **133 627**.
6. If the educator's concern fits with any of the following, on the decision tree found on the on-line mandatory reporting guide, namely: physical abuse, neglect, sexual abuse, psychological harm, child in danger of self-harm, relinquishing care, parents with possible substance abuse, mental health problems or domestic violence or mother in danger with an unborn child, the educator would proceed with the 'guide' for an outcome.
4. If an educator's concern does not fit any of the decision trees found on the on-line mandatory reporting guide, it is probably not reportable, but educator may consult with your Department's Child Wellbeing Unit (CWU) and/or nominated supervisor as appropriate.

RISK MANAGMENT

This service identifies, evaluates and plans strategies to minimise the risk of children coming into harm, being abused or neglected by a parent, employee, volunteer or another child.

1. **A code of conduct:** Is communicated in regard to values, attitudes and responsibilities of this service to all concerned on the issue of child protection, establishing best practice expectations. Identifying appropriate and inappropriate behaviours and language is part of the code of conduct.
2. **Privacy and data protection:** this service complies with confidentiality and privacy legislation.
3. **Participation and empowerment of children this service:** recognises that all forms of abuse are a symbolic representation of 'power' and of the offender's need to control. The promotion of children's participation in the development of child safe strategies and policies is a beneficial step in creating child safe environments. Children and adults at this service are encouraged to be empowered but not to wield 'power' over others. This service aims to empower children to speak out or disclose information through awareness programs that encourage children with their educator to discuss what is 'safe' and who may be a 'safe' person to talk to.
4. **Child protection awareness programs and plans:** This service has a commitment to implementing best practice plans and learning strategies for children through individual and group experiences. For example, the issue of abuse/power is covered in programming from time to time, to allow children through discussion, role-playing and puppetry to recognise control-wielding power and the need to instead be respectful to others. Children are encouraged and guided to empathise with others and to treat others as they would like to be treated ie with care, respect and acceptance of differences, including differences of opinions and values. Children learn through example and role modelling is an important strategy in teaching children about protective behaviours.

All children are encouraged to be empowered in regard to their own personal private parts of their body and own personal space. Children are encouraged to be respectful when other children are in the bathroom or undressing in any way. Staff/ volunteers or contractors are required to not be with a child on their own, or in any room. During induction staff are informed there will be another educator, in the open adjoining room, at all times.

5. Employee selection & Duty Statements: Potential staff members are required to produce a criminal history, national police or 'working with children' check. At the interview candidates and interviewer discuss the responsibility of the educator to maximise the protection of children from potential harm, abuse or neglect with a clear, professional understanding of these expectations of educators to comply with the Child Protection Policy and additional legislative or regulatory requirements. Referees are checked to ensure there are no outstanding issues at other places of employment. Recruitment reflects natural justice, procedural fairness and equal opportunity obligations.