

Fact sheet

Child safe early childhood education and care services

As a parent or carer, it's important to understand what a child safe service looks like, both when choosing an early childhood education and care (ECEC) service for your child, and throughout their ECEC journey.

What is a 'child safe' service?

The NSW Office of the Children's Guardian describes child safe organisations as those where every child is valued, and their rights to safety and wellbeing are respected and upheld.

In an ECEC setting, being child safe means having established rules and practices in place to protect children from physical, sexual and psychological ill-treatment, neglect and harm, and other risks to their health, safety and wellbeing.

What does a child safe service look like?

There are signs and behaviours you can look out for that show a service takes child safety seriously. A child safe service typically:

- implements the **Child Safe Standards** (ocg.nsw.gov.au/child-safe-scheme/what-are-child-safe-standards) and embeds child safety in their day-to-day practices
- has a **Code of Conduct and policies and procedures** that clearly outline practices that support children's safety. These are accessible to families and cover topics such as service and room layouts, risk assessments, supervision plans, the use of electronic devices and other policies and procedures that identify, prevent and respond to possible risks to child safety.
- conducts **regular, ongoing training for their educators and staff** on child safe practices, cultural safety, mandatory reporting and respectful and appropriate interactions with children to ensure they understand their responsibilities and remain up to date on evolving child safe practices.
- has a **clear complaints handling policy and procedure** that is regularly reviewed and communicated in accessible and meaningful formats to staff, families, community members and children, mindful of diverse needs, cultural backgrounds and abilities.





- has a **record of their compliance** available for families to view at any time upon request.
- has **adequate supervision plans and practices** to ensure children in their care are supervised effectively.
- has natural and **clear lines of sight across all indoor and outdoor areas** to promote visibility and accessibility of other staff and children.
- **regularly communicates with families** about their commitment and collective responsibility for child safety. This can be through the service’s website, social media, noticeboards, newsletters, during meetings and events, and/or posters around the service.
- provides families with **opportunities for shared decision-making** about their child’s learning and wellbeing.
- respectfully communicates with children by **providing information in a way children can understand**, by listening and responding to their voices and respecting non-verbal cues.
- shows children that they are **welcome no matter their abilities or cultural background**.
- incorporates the **diverse support needs of children and families** in their programming and decision making.
- ensures **parents and children know what is expected from staff at their service**. Gives families information on the roles, responsibilities and skills of their staff and inform parents and children of staff changes.
- ensures staff, families and community members **know who to contact if they have questions** about the service’s child safe policies and procedures.

Child safe ECEC services champion and model a child safe culture at all levels of the service – from the top down, and from the bottom up.

Where to from here?

It’s one thing to know what a child safe service should look like, and another to know how to have conversations with an ECEC service about the child safe practices they use in their unique setting and context.

We have developed a **Child safe guide for parents and carers** to help you initiate and engage in conversation with your child’s service about their child safe practices.



More information

Visit the **NSW Department of Education’s Child safety webpage** or email ececd@det.nsw.edu.au



Do you need an interpreter?

If you need an interpreter, you can access telephone interpreters any time through **Translating and Interpreting Service National** by phoning **131 450** (24 hours, every day of the year). This allows you to speak with us with the assistance of an interpreter in a language of your choosing.