

Child Safe Standards

Key messages for the early childhood education sector

Key points for leaders

Under current legislation and the National Quality Standards relating to children's safety, leaders should:

Employers

Make sure you check WWCCs and that these remain current

Make sure you undertake comprehensive reference checks of all staff before they commence working in a service. Ask detailed questions including whether there have been complaints made about them in other services.

Approved providers and nominated supervisors

Ensure every reasonable precaution is taken to protect children from harm and hazard, and ensure no child is subject to any form of corporal punishment or any discipline that is unreasonable.

Approved providers

Ensure your staff know and understand the service's policies and procedures, their role and responsibilities in providing a child safe environment, and their mandatory reporting obligations.

All leaders

Arrange staffing to enhance children's learning and development.

Implement systems to manage risk and enable effective management and operation of a quality service, with clearly defined roles and responsibilities for all staff.

Support families from enrolment to be involved in and informed about the service, and have opportunities to contribute to service decisions.

Ensure there is an effective self-assessment and quality improvement process in place.

The Child Safe Standards enhance these requirements and provide extra considerations for leaders to improve child safe cultures and practices, including:

- o Establish a strong organisational culture that puts child safety at the centre.
- o Regularly communicate about the service's commitment and collective responsibility for child safety.
- o Ensure families are aware of the variety of roles and people in those roles in your organisation, and children and families are informed of staff changes.
- o Consider how recruitment strategies and induction processes ensure all staff understand what is expected of them in providing a child safe environment.
- o Use the Office of the Children's Guardian resources to develop a [child safe Code of Conduct](#).
- o Ensure your service and room layouts, risk assessments, supervision plans, and other policies and procedures identify, prevent and respond to possible risks to child safety, and consider both physical and online environments. Engage in regular reviews of these (at least annually, and after critical incidents), and consider engaging an external expert to ensure they comply with the Child Safe Standards, reflect current best practice and incorporate stakeholder feedback.

- o Provide regular training on mandatory reporting, child safe practice, cultural safety, identifying signs or risks of abuse and practical ways to respond to disclosure.
 - o Ensure complaints handling policies and procedures are accessible and available in a variety of formats so that staff, families, community members and children know how to raise concerns, and complaints are taken seriously and responded to promptly and thoroughly.
 - o Make sure all staff are familiar with the processes they should take to raise any concerns they may have.
- You should familiarise yourself with the [Child Safe Standards](#) and use them as a benchmark to assess your organisation's child safe practices. Use these as a guide to continue to improve ways your organisation acts to put the interests of children first, to keep them safe from harm.

Key points for educators

Under current legislation and the National Quality Standards relating to children's safety, educators should:

Stay up-to-date and informed about your role and your mandatory reporting requirements and responsibilities.

Ensure that no child is subjected to any form of corporal punishment or any discipline that is unreasonable.

Report any concerns you have about a child's wellbeing or safety. If you have concerns about a child's safety, talk to your manager or supervisor. If you can't talk to your manager or supervisor, or you are concerned that inadequate action has been taken in response to your concerns, contact a [relevant agency](#) for more information.

Ensure reasonable precautions and adequate supervision is used to protect children from harm and hazard, at all times.

Promote each child's agency, enabling them to make choices and decisions, and create environments that promote children's inclusion and competence.

Maintain the dignity and rights of every child.

Build respectful and equitable relationships that support each child to feel secure, confident and included.

Respect the expertise, culture, values and beliefs of families, and ensure families share in decision-making about their child's learning and wellbeing.

The Child Safe Standards also provide extra considerations for educators to improve their child safe practices, including:

- o Ensure children know who they can go to for help or with a concern when they need to, and that they won't get in trouble for doing so.
- o Ensure you discuss concerns about child safety even when you are not sure if the concern is real.
- o Support children's early understandings of consent by acknowledging and respecting a child's right to refuse or say no.
- o Educate children to recognise safe environments.
- o Ensure physical environments contain images of a range of cultures and abilities, and curriculum decisions uphold all children's rights.
- o Actively engage in reviews of your service's policies and procedures, and consider them from a child safe perspective to find ways to improve processes.