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Child Safe Standards in Family Day Care

What are the Child Safe Standards?

The Office of the Children's Guardian

It's important that we first understand the role of the Office of the Children's Guardian and the part they play in the advocacy of child protection. The Office of the Children's Guardian is an independent statutory body that promotes the interests, safety and rights of children and young people in NSW.

The core functions of the Office of the Children's Guardian include administering Working With Children Checks, the Reportable Conduct Scheme and implementation of the Child Safe Standards.

Under the new laws passed by the NSW Government, the [Office of the Children's Guardian](#) has additional powers to monitor and investigate how organisations, including Family Day Care education services, implement the [Child Safe Standards](#) to support the safety and wellbeing of children and young people.

Child Safe Standards

The Child Safe Standards provide a framework for creating child safe organisations. They are designed to drive cultural change and to create, maintain and improve child safe practices. When organisations apply the Standards, they build a culture where abuse of children is prevented, responded to and reported.

– The Office of the Children's Guardian

Why do we have Child Safe Standards?

In November 2012, the then Prime Minister, Julia Gillard, announced that she would recommend to the Governor-General that a Royal Commission be appointed to inquire into institutional responses to child abuse.

In 2015, the Commission completed its investigation. Based on these findings, the Commission concluded that commitment is required in order to prevent the harm of children. As a result, the Child Safe Standards were created.

The Child Safe Standards provide a framework for making organisations safer for children. They have been accepted by the NSW Government and are based on extensive research and consultation.

The Standards provide practical guidance for Family Day Care services to create cultures, adopt strategies and act to put the interests of children first, to keep them safe from harm.



Laws and Regulations

The Child Safe Standards apply to all entities listed in the [Children's Guardian Act 2019](#). In the Act, Family Day Care services fall under Schedule 1 – an approved education and care service within the meaning of the [Children \(Education and Care Services\) National Law \(NSW\)](#).

Some other examples of organisations that fall under this Act are:

- ▶ The Department of Education, including government and non-government schools
- ▶ Outside school hours care
- ▶ Hospitals and health care services
- ▶ Children's sport and recreation services, such as swim schools, football clubs and dance schools
- ▶ An agency providing substitute residential care for children
- ▶ Adoption services.

Under the Education and Care Services National Regulations, an approved provider **must**:

- ▶ Ensure that policies and procedures are in place for providing a child safe environment (**regulation 168**)
- ▶ Take reasonable steps to ensure those policies and procedures are followed (**regulation 170**).

All children have the right to experience quality education and care in a safe and healthy environment, be it physical, emotional or social.

To reflect this, your policies should provide a clear set of guidelines to ensure:

- ▶ Children at the service are provided with a safe environment at all times
- ▶ Approved Providers, Nominated Supervisors, educators and other staff at a service meet their legislative obligations to prevent harm and hazard towards children



- ▶ There is timely and effective identification of, and response to, children who may be at risk of or who are experiencing abuse or neglect.

When developing your policies and procedures for providing a child safe environment, you will need to consider the physical environment, staffing, supervision and child protection requirements.

Compliance measures

On **1 February 2023**, it became mandatory for Family Day Care operators to comply with Child Safe Standards in their service. This also includes if you have children in your home before school and after school.

When organisations do not comply with the Child Safe Standards, the Office of the Children's Guardian can:

- ▶ Issue a compliance notice to the organisation, or
- ▶ Accept an enforceable undertaking from the organisation.

If an organisation fails to comply with a compliance notice or enforceable undertaking, the Office of the Children's Guardian may commence proceedings to issue penalties.



The Child Safe Standards

The Child Safe Standards identify the 10 elements that work together to make organisations safer. The advantage is that the Standards are flexible – which is great news for Family Day Care, as your context differs from other early childhood education services:

1. Child safety is embedded in organisational leadership, governance and culture
2. Children participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously
3. Families and communities are informed and involved
4. Equity is upheld and diverse needs are taken into account
5. People working with children are suitable and supported
6. Processes to respond to complaints of child abuse are child-focused
7. Staff are equipped with the knowledge, skills and awareness to keep children safe through continual education and training
8. Physical and online environments minimise the opportunity for abuse to occur

9. Implementation of the Child Safe Standards is continuously reviewed and improved

10. Policies and procedures document how the organisation is child safe.

Guide to the Child Safe Standards

[A Guide to the Child Safe Standards](#) is available to download from the Office of the Children’s Guardian, and [Implementing the Child Safe Standards in Early Childhood and Outside School Hours services](#) from the NSW Department of Education.

The guide to the Child Safe Standards and implementing the Child Safe Standards describe:

- ▶ What it means to be a leader of a child safe organisation
- ▶ How to involve children in decisions that affect them
- ▶ What policies and procedures you should have
- ▶ How child-friendly reporting processes help ensure children are safe.

These wonderful guides also give you an idea of ‘performance evidence’, which means what the standards should look like in action or what behaviours you might see when this is

implemented effectively. They also have excellent reflective questions to help identify any gaps in your services.

Understanding the Child Safe Standards

The Royal Commission’s outcome on child safe organisations is underpinned by Article 3 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. Article 3 states: *all organisations concerned with children should work towards what is best for each child.*

The Child Safe Standards are a benchmark against which Family Day Care services can assess their child safe capability and set performance targets.

The standards work together to articulate what makes a child safe environment. All the standards are of equal importance and are interrelated. They should be read holistically, not in isolation, as there are necessary overlaps. Standards can cut across, or be relevant to, other standards.

The standards are designed to be principle-based and focused on outcomes and changing workplace culture. It’s not about setting strict rules that must be followed or specific initiatives that must be implemented.

This is to enable the standards to be dynamic and responsive and be flexible to the changing needs of the organisation.

How the standards can positively impact your service

They have been designed to:

- ▶ Help drive cultural change in Family Day Care services and other organisations. Cultural change sees educators and staff adopt behaviours and mindsets that are consistent with the goals of the service and the values of child safety
- ▶ Be principle-based and outcome-focused: these are a series of tangible and practical applications that you embed into your Family Day Care service daily. The outcomes of this should be measurable, for example, a new employee code of conduct is implemented, or your service has completed the Child Safe Self-Assessment tool and the outcome of that has been considered in your future practices

- ▶ Be flexible enough that they can be adapted by organisations of varying sizes and characteristics – for example, the standards can be applied in Family Day Care services or large primary schools and still be just as effective
- ▶ Avoid placing undue burden on organisations
- ▶ Help organisations address multiple risks
- ▶ Balance caution and caring
- ▶ Be a benchmark against which organisations can assess their child safe capability and set performance targets
- ▶ Be of equal importance and interrelated.

Differences between ‘child protection’ and ‘child safe’

‘**Child protection**’ is how you respond to a high-risk situation. It’s your legal responsibility as a mandatory reporter to report to the police if you believe a child is being abused or harmed. Child protection describes what you can do so that child harm is less likely to happen, and perpetrators are more likely to be caught.

Being ‘**child safe**’ is creating a culture of child safety within your organisation so that harm and abuse are less likely to happen, and children are supported in communicating about their safety.

Child safe organisations

Child safe organisations create cultures, adopt strategies and act to prevent harm to children, including sexual abuse.

The Australian and New Zealand Children’s Commissioners and Guardians define a child safe organisation as one that systematically:

- ▶ Creates conditions to reduce the likelihood of children being harmed

- ▶ Creates conditions that increase the likelihood of identifying and reporting harm
- ▶ Responds appropriately to disclosures, allegations and suspicions of harm.



The Child Safe Standards



Standard 1: Child safety is embedded in organisational leadership, governance and culture

A child safe organisation is committed to child safety. This is demonstrated in its leadership, in the way the organisation is managed and by the day-to-day activities it carries out. A child safe organisational culture drives the way things are done and how issues and risks are managed.

NQS links: [Quality Area 2: Children's health and safety](#); [Quality Area 7: Governance and leadership](#); and [Quality Area 4: Staffing arrangements](#).

Leaders play a vital role in creating and maintaining a culture where children's rights and safety are prioritised. They ensure all staff understand that keeping children safe is everyone's responsibility and make sure staff know what is expected of them. Good leaders can make sure there are clear rules and procedures to ensure all staff are aware.

This may look like:

- ▶ Regular contact with educators ensuring there is allocated time to discuss child safety

- ▶ Ensuring Family Day Care co-ordinators complete child protection training prior to commencing employment and undertake annual refresher training
- ▶ Supporting educators to attend annual child protection refresher training and attending other child safety professional development
- ▶ Supporting all Family Day Care educators and staff to confidently describe their Service Provider's commitment to child protection
- ▶ Celebrate National Child Protection Week, Safer Internet Day and other events with children that specifically promote child safety.

And, of course, when we talk about championing a child safe cultural change, this should be through your attitudes, behaviours and actions. For example, promoting and living the child safe Code of Conduct, and setting the standard of behaviour for your organisation.

Standard 2: Children participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously

Children are safer when organisations teach them about their rights to be heard, listened to and believed. A child safe organisation actively seeks the opinions of children and, when doing so, considers their age, development, maturity, understanding, abilities and how they communicate. Children are encouraged and supported to regularly contribute to decisions that affect them.

NQS links: [Quality Area 1: Educational program and practice](#); and [Quality Area 5: Relationships with children](#).

EYLF link: [Belonging Being Becoming, Outcome 1.1: Children feel safe, secure, and supported](#).

The opportunities we can give children to feel encouraged and empowered to speak up and be believed include:

- ▶ Introduce children to their own protective rights by respecting their physical space and only using touch when necessary and appropriate

- ▶ Support children's early understanding of consent by acknowledging and respecting a child's right to refuse or say "no"
- ▶ Teach children formal names for their body parts so then if abuse does occur, the disclosure and reporting are clear
- ▶ Children are aware of whom to tell if they feel like they're in danger
- ▶ Talk about emotions and how your body might feel when you are happy, sad, scared, excited, etc.
- ▶ Ask children if they feel safe in their educators home and how they could feel safer.

SAFE Series

The Office of the Children's Guardian has developed a series of four children's books, known as the SAFE Series. The series has been developed as a tool for child-related workers who want to introduce the concept of personal safety in a

non-confrontational way to children under the age of six. Each book includes a theme that works in conjunction with the other books in the series and can be used as a way of teaching children about what is referred to as 'protective behaviours'; that is, behaviours that will help keep them safe from harm or abuse.

The SAFE Series intends to reduce incidents of abuse by removing the secrecy abusers rely upon as a tool to offend against children. It also helps children understand their emotions, particularly when they feel sad, scared or upset.

By using the SAFE Series, adults can help children develop the ability to communicate when they feel safe or unsafe.

Follow [this link to register in free training](#) and to receive your set of SAFE Series books.



Standard 3: Families and communities are informed and involved

Staff in child safe organisations understand that parents, carers and other important people in a child's life have the primary responsibility for raising their children. A child safe organisation talks to, consults with and invites the participation of families, caregivers and the broader community to promote the rights of children.

NQS links: [Quality Area 1: Educational program and practice](#); [Quality Area 3: Physical environment](#); and [Quality Area 6: Collaborative partnerships with families and communities](#).


Families should be informed about all child safety and protective learning that you teach children in your care. Some practices you can use are:

- ▶ Ensure current information about how the service promotes child safety is available to families, as well as relevant community services and resources. You may do

this in your weekly or monthly updates and invite families to give feedback

- ▶ Send regular, strong, child safe messages via your online platforms
- ▶ Have a dedicated 'child protection and safety' section on your website, social media, or newsletters
- ▶ Ensure families are aware of your policies and know where to find them
- ▶ Ensure families and carers are aware of the child safe Code of Conduct at your service and agree to abide by it at all times.

Families should feel comfortable approaching educators with any concerns regarding child safety. However, some families may prefer to speak with a co-ordinator about their concerns.



Who can families talk to and raise issues with in your service?

Standard 4: Equity is upheld and diverse needs are taken into account

A child safe organisation provides culturally safe and child-friendly services. It pays attention to equity by taking into account children's diverse circumstances. It recognises that some children are more vulnerable to abuse than others, or find it harder to speak up and be heard. Organisations should try to protect and support all children equitably.

NQS links: [Quality Area 1: Educational program and practice](#); [Quality Area 3: Physical environment](#); [Quality Area 5: Relationships with children](#); [Quality Area 6: Collaborative partnerships with families and communities](#); and [Quality Area 7: Governance and leadership](#).

Cultural safety and diverse needs

General child safe policies and procedures sometimes overlook the needs of culturally diverse children and young people. The Royal Commission found that these children can experience heightened vulnerability because of their

circumstances and require a more considered approach.

For example, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children may be less likely to disclose abuse because of a lack of cultural safety or fear of authorities intruding into their families and communities, based on historical experiences of systemic racism and abuse.

Applying the Child Safe Standards allows organisations to pay particular attention to the cultural safety of children. Organisations are encouraged to engage with communities to ensure their child safe approach reflects the diversity of the children and communities they serve.

The Royal Commissions findings identified that children from these groups are more vulnerable to abuse:

- ▶ Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and culturally and linguistically diverse children
- ▶ Children with disabilities

- ▶ Gender diverse children
- ▶ Children from lower socio-economic backgrounds
- ▶ Children living with one parent or no parents
- ▶ Children who have experienced prior abuse or maltreatment.

What are some ways we can address these vulnerabilities in your Family Day Care services? We can:

- ▶ Adapt how we respond to the diverse needs of children
- ▶ Make it clear in the policies and procedures
- ▶ Treat every case individually, not as blanket care
- ▶ Budget for additional resources
- ▶ Prioritise staff professional development.

Equity, inclusion and high expectations is one of the guiding principles of *The Early Years Learning Framework* – educators are guided to promote an inclusive environment for the children in their care. There are many opportunities where we can support children to participate to their full potential based on their individual needs, including:

- ▶ Ensure you are aware of and discuss the range of diversity at your service



- ▶ Ensure the physical environment contains positive images representative of a range of cultures and abilities
- ▶ Celebrate events to highlight Aboriginal culture and history, for example, National Apology Day, Reconciliation Week and NAIDOC Week. Invite people from your local community to provide education that is relevant for the country your service is on, for example, Gadigal land, Wiradjuri land, etc.
- ▶ Celebrate diversity and significant cultural festivals such as International Day of Persons with Disabilities, Chinese New Year, Ramadan, Rosh Hashanah. Incorporate celebrations, recognition of events and festivals that are relevant to your children and families
- ▶ Seek input from children with disability and their families about the design and delivery of your service and the best ways to encourage children or families to voice their concerns
- ▶ Create culturally safe environments for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds
- ▶ Develop and implement a [Reconciliation Action Plan](#) (RAP).



Standard 5: People working with children are suitable and supported

This standard is about human resource management, which includes screening, recruitment, on-boarding, inductions and performance reviews of staff and volunteers. Human resource management plays a vital role in protecting children from harm.

Child safe organisations make sure child safety is prioritised when they are selecting and managing staff. They recognise that a verified Working With Children Check is an important step, but that other screening practices must also be used.

NQS links: [Quality Area 2: Children's health and safety](#); and [Quality Area 7: Governance and leadership](#).

This standard is based on your recruitment and retention process. What steps can education and care services do to attract, recruit, supervise and support staff to keep children safe?

These include:

- ▶ Ensure you maintain an up-to-date record of Working With Children Checks, which can be validated on the Office of the Children's Guardian website. If cleared, the check will be valid for five years; however, applicants are continuously monitored
- ▶ Providing additional safeguards, such as all members of the household have Working With Children Checks and police checks
- ▶ Ensure all staff or volunteers receive an appropriate induction to the service prior to beginning working with children. Many Service Providers now have induction checklists, which is an excellent idea. It is the responsibility of both staff and volunteers to be aware of any child protection law and any obligations held under it
- ▶ Ensure children and families are informed about staff changes



- ▶ Ensure you are aware of your reporting requirements and how to raise concerns related to child safety
- ▶ Seek support and clarification in understanding the service's policies and procedures. Many services review their policies yearly and invite staff and family feedback.

Child Safe Code of Conduct

Another way we can ensure all staff are aware of their responsibilities in ensuring the protection of children is to develop a Child Safe Code of Conduct.

The Children's Guardian Regulation 2022 requires an authorised employer to develop a Child Safe Code of Conduct.

The purpose of the Child Safe Code of Conduct is to outline the minimum expected behaviours between workers and children as part of your commitment to creating safe environments.

Keep in mind, your Child Safe Code of Conduct should be specific to your Family Day Care service.

The Child Safe Code of Conduct is signed by the staff member at the time of employment and is stored in their personal file. The Child Safe Code of Conduct should be reviewed annually. Click this link to download a copy of [Developing a Child Safe Code of Conduct](#) from the Office of the Children's Guardian.



How does your service demonstrate a commitment to keeping children safe? What are the expected child safe behaviours that can be included in your service's Child Safe Code of Conduct?

Standard 6: Processes to respond to complaints of child abuse are child focused

A child-focused complaint process supports children who are exposed to the risk of harm and encourages them to speak up. Children, families and staff know whom to tell if they want to make a complaint of child abuse. Child safe organisations respond by immediately protecting children at risk.

Complaints are addressed promptly, thoroughly and fairly. All adults understand their reporting obligations, including to external authorities.

NQF links: [Quality Area 5: Relationships with children](#); and [Quality Area 7: Governance and leadership](#).

The objective of Standard 6 is to ensure children are the priority when responding to complaints. All staff working with children must guarantee that all children's needs are prioritised when responding to complaints.

The Royal Commission identified that some children disclosed small details of abuse to gauge adults reactions.

This is where the importance and effectiveness of staff training comes into play to ensure that even the smallest disclosures are recognised, responded to and reported.

Educators must pay attention to changes in a child's behaviour and reactions to different staff members – this can indicate the child's preferences or that there could be something wrong.

Educators can provide child friendly ways to make a complaint, for example, through drawing or small group discussions immediately following an incident. Providing children with opportunities to engage in these conversations will also help support their developing understandings of social justice and advocacy for others

We also have a responsibility to 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.

Complaints and allegations template

Child safe cultures create environments where staff can identify and report suspected harm to children. All staff should be aware of the process of recording complaints and allegations.

The Office of the Children's Guardian provides [a template that you can implement](#) in your service. This template is to help you record complaints in your organisation and is to be used in conjunction with your own child safe complaints management policy.

















Reporting incidents and concerns

Follow [this link to more resources](#) on the NSW Department of Education website.

Reporting Obligations poster

The Reporting Obligations poster (below) is available from the Office of the Children's Guardian website. It shows families, staff or volunteers where and to whom they can make reports. Having this poster on display facilitates a culture of reporting and ensures everyone is informed and knows their obligations. Reports often need to be made to more than one agency, as the chart explains.



 <p>NSW Police Force</p>  <p>Make a report to police if the matter involves conduct towards a child that you suspect may be criminal in nature.</p> <p>For emergencies call 000 For police assistance and general enquiries call 131 444</p> 	 <p>Department of Communities and Justice (DCJ)</p>  <p>Make a report to DCJ if you suspect a child is at risk of significant harm.</p> <p>Types of abuse include neglect, sexual, physical and emotional.</p> <p>Call the Child Protection Helpline on 132 111</p> 	 <p>Reportable Conduct Scheme</p>  <p>Notify reportable allegations against staff, certain volunteers and contractors within 7 working days.</p> <p>For advice and support contact 02 8219 3900 reportableconduct@ocg.nsw.gov.au</p> 	 <p>NSW Regulatory Authority</p>  <p>Notify incidents, complaints and allegations via the National Quality Agenda IT System (NQA ITS).</p> <p>You can also call 1800 619 113 or email ececd@det.nsw.edu.au</p> 	 <p>Organisational response</p> <p>Every concerning matter is an opportunity for your organisation to strengthen its child safe practices and culture. This includes assessing and reviewing relevant policies and procedures.</p> <p>For support implementing child safe practices contact the Office of the Children's Guardian on 02 8219 3600</p> 
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Standard 7: Staff are equipped with the knowledge, skills and awareness to keep children safe through continual education and training

A child safe organisation promotes continuous learning and provides regular ongoing education and training. Staff continually build their abilities to keep children safe.

NQS links: [Quality Area 4: Staffing arrangements](#) and [Quality Area 7: Governance and leadership](#).

There are a number of ways to ensure that staff members have up-to-date knowledge regarding child protection. Some of these include:

- ▶ Signing up for newsletters and websites to build your awareness of child safety, such as the NSW Office of the Children's Guardian and the eSafety Commissioner
- ▶ Ensuring you understand your mandatory reporting obligations and adhere to these

- ▶ Reporting any concerns about child safety within your service to management.

If you are a service provider or scheme manager, how can you ensure that all your educators are confident in child protection procedures?

- ▶ You could consider educator's learning styles and offer multi-modal training where different forms of delivery (such as face-to-face, electronic, printed) are used to ensure the diverse needs of different learners are supported
- ▶ Consider language and cultural issues when planning training

- ▶ Keep a training register that includes dates, names of participants and when training content should be reviewed
- ▶ Ask for feedback from participants about the quality and usefulness of the training
- ▶ Find out if your educators know the difference between child protection and child safety. Are they aware of organisational abuse or do they need more support?



Standard 8: Physical and online environments minimise the opportunity for abuse to occur

A child safe organisation adapts its physical environments to minimise opportunities for abuse to occur. Organisations offer a balance between visibility and children's privacy, creative play and other activities. Child safe organisations also address risks in the online environment by educating children and adults about how to avoid harm and how to detect signs of online grooming.

NQS links: [Quality Area 2: Children's health and safety](#); [Quality Area 3: Physical environment](#); [Quality Area 4: Staffing arrangements](#); and [Quality Area 7: Governance and leadership](#).

In Family Day Care services, it is not possible for Service Providers to be physically there in educator's homes every day.

To ensure the physical safety and supervision of children, Service Providers/Nominated Supervisors should:

- ▶ Ensure there is a service policy that covers the creation of a child safe culture and the safe use of online environments
- ▶ Conduct an extensive risk assessment at the time of recruitment, considering all factors such as who lives in the home, who has access to where the children are, the physical environment and visibility
- ▶ Prioritising face to face visits as opposed to phone or Zoom calls
- ▶ Ensure accurate record keeping, including making your own recordings of dates and times of when other household members are home. Perhaps a family member is now working from home or has lost their job. How does this impact the environment?
- ▶ Conduct regular spot checks
- ▶ Maintain good relationships with educators to ensure strong partnerships and mentoring.

Safety around technology

What policies and safeguards do you have around the use of technology in your Family Day Care?

Linked here on the QR code below is a checklist for early childhood services around safe technology use. The checklist is used to identify online risks and is a guide to improving the online safety practices of children and adults. The checklist is not intended to be exhaustive, and there may be specific considerations in different contexts.

The checklist has been developed in consultation with the Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA) and is referenced to the National Quality Standard (NQS) and *Early Years Learning Framework*. You can use it as evidence in Assessment and Rating. ACECQA advises a checklist such as this should be shared and discussed with educators to ensure it is understood by your whole team.



Standard 9: Implementation of the Child Safe Standards is continuously reviewed and improved

Child safe organisations know it takes ongoing effort to maintain a safe environment for children. Leaders embed a culture of learning and put in place systems to monitor and evaluate how they have implemented the Child Safe Standards. Staff keep up to date with emerging knowledge and trends to continuously improve practices and can demonstrate that policies and procedures have changed over time.

NQS links: [Quality Area 7: Governance and Leadership](#).

Continuous improvement in Family Day Care and education care services can look like:

- ▶ Annually reviewing child safe policies, procedures and practices and after critical incidents, or more regularly if necessary
- ▶ Ensure your policies and procedures are informed by best practice, relevant legislation and consider the needs of the children in your care
- ▶ Network with other education and care services or organisations to share knowledge, experience and good practice ideas. In Family Day Care, it's common to have meet-ups or play dates with fellow Family Day Care educators. This is a perfect opportunity to share experiences and practice ideas around child safety
- ▶ Seek feedback from families, staff, volunteers/students and children about their experience of the complaints handling process, or their views more generally about your child safe practices, and how this work is communicated – and then act on this feedback where necessary
- ▶ For services where there may be staff working alone with children – such as Family Day Care services – give particular attention to the review and continuous improvement process in relation to effective risk management in these contexts.



Standard 10: Policies and procedures document how the organisation is child safe

Child safe organisations have policies and procedures that describe how they maintain a safe environment for children. They know that these documents are only effective if they are implemented.

Policies and procedures should be relevant to all aspects of an organisation and reflect the Child Safe Standards.

They are championed by leaders, understood by staff, and available to the community in accessible formats and languages.

NQF links: [Quality Area 6: Collaborative partnerships with families and communities](#); and [Quality Area 7: Governance and leadership](#).

It's important for all educators to be familiar with the policies and procedures around child safety. The following are examples of policies and procedures we are referring to:

- ▶ **Child safe environment policy**
- ▶ **Child safe Code of Conduct**
- ▶ **Supervision policy**
- ▶ **Child safe risk management policy**
- ▶ **Sleep policy** – research has shown that sleep time can be a high-risk time for children in an unsafe environment. We need to consider: where are the children? What's the ratio? Is there visibility?
- ▶ **Child safe human resources policy** – this is your recruitment process, so when interviewing potential educators, ask for a Working With Children Check number and verify it, have questions about child protection in the interview process, and ensure they have current child protection training.

- ▶ **Complaints handling** – does your complaints policy explain how children, educators and families can raise concerns?
- ▶ **Risk management procedures** – especially when hiring a new Family Day Care educator and when you are doing a risk assessment of their home. You might consider environment setups, or are there any blind spots? Who else lives in the home? Do they have access to the children? How often are they there?
- ▶ **Staff induction checklist** – when a new staff starts with you in your induction process, you should include making staff aware of child protection policies and procedures and where they are kept on your premises
- ▶ **Survey staff** about child safe policies and procedures to identify any gaps in knowledge and target training and support.

Does your service have all Policies that cover child safety?

If you have answered “no”, you will need to identify where the gaps lie in your organisation’s policies and procedures and can now take steps to improve that.

Remember, enforcement measures against implementing the Child Safe Standards commenced on **1 February 2023**. Does your service have a policy regarding the implementation of the standards, as well as the policies listed on the previous page?



Child Safe Policy template

If the Child Safe Policy is one of the documents you have identified as not having, the Office of the Children's Guardian has provided a template which is linked here.



Understanding policies

To ensure staff and families understand the policies, we can:

- ▶ Hold information nights
- ▶ Translate policies and procedures into different languages to meet the needs of Culturally and Linguistically Diverse families and staff
- ▶ As Family Day Care educators, you have the advantage of having close relationships with the children and families in your care. You may choose to have one-on-one conversations and see if they have any further questions
- ▶ Reading policies as part of your induction process
- ▶ Family Day Care managers can start a private Facebook group to discuss child safe policies and answer reflective

questions with other members of their scheme. This is a wonderful way to collaborate with one another and maintain a safe space for staff.

It's apparent there were overlaps between the 10 Child Safe Standards and that they should all be of equal importance. They are interrelated and keep in mind that these standards need to be applied to your service specifically. It's not about:

- ▶ Spending money
- ▶ Ticking boxes
- ▶ Saying the right thing.

It is important for Family Day Care services to understand that Child Safe Standards should not be implemented in a one-size-fits-all manner. Instead, services should interpret these standards in a way that is consistent with your own culture, values, and specific context. By doing so, they can ensure that the implementation of child safe practices is meaningful and relevant within their particular service setting.

The National Principles

A key framework we need to be aware of is the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations. The National Principles were derived from the Standards. The National Principles have a broader scope that goes beyond child sexual abuse to cover other forms of potential harm, such as psychological, emotional and physical harm and neglect.

Both the NSW Child Safe Standards and the National Principles describe the necessary elements for child safe practices. The Office of the Children's Guardian considers that if you are implementing the National Principles, you will also be implementing the Child Safe Standards.

We know that there are many frameworks, regulations and legislation in place around keeping children safe from harm in Family Day Care services. The standards are simply an extension of these requirements, and aim to support you to continuously enhance your child safe practice.



Child Safe Self-Assessment

The Child Safe Self-Assessment will assist your organisation in identifying areas of strength and opportunities for improvement in how your organisation implements the NSW Child Safe Standards. It is a capability-building resource to help improve child safe practice and keep children safe from harm.



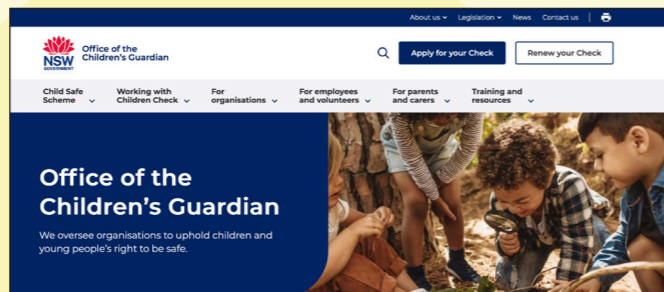
Putting children's safety first

The following values should remain at the heart of our approach to prioritising children's safety:

- ▶ The best interests of children and their protection from harm and hazard is paramount
- ▶ Child abuse is not tolerated and must not happen
- ▶ Children's rights are understood and respected
- ▶ Concerns about child safety raised by children and their parents and carers are acted on
- ▶ Reporting abuse is not obstructed or prevented.

Additional resources

The Office of the Children's Guardian has everything you need to help you become a child safe organisation, including policy templates and samples, resources from our training programs and links to relevant organisations.



This booklet is part of the PD In Your Pocket professional development program.



This topic – **Child Safe Standards in Family Day Care** – has an accompanying webinar and video, both of which can be viewed as videos or listened to as podcasts.

There is also a Facebook Group where you can discuss the topic with other Family Day Care educators in NSW.

For more information about PD In Your Pocket, go to:

www.nswfdc.org.au/pdinyourpocket



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