

2.16 Promoting Protective Behaviours Policy

The service considers its role in the protection of children of utmost importance and therefore takes a proactive approach in supporting families and children through promoting protective behaviours to ensure children's ongoing safety, wellbeing, and protection.

The Centers of Disease Control state adverse childhood experiences (ACE) are common and can have long-term negative impacts on health, opportunity and well-being. According to Emerging Minds, 'an estimated 72% of Australian children have been exposed to at least one ACE, with this rate being higher in some vulnerable Australian populations e.g. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders (Zubrick et al., 2005), juvenile offenders (Baglivio et al., 2014), and children involved in welfare services (Kerker et al., 2015). Promoting and encouraging children to practice protective behaviours can lead to minimised adverse risks.



Relevant Laws and other Provisions

The laws and other provisions affecting this policy include:

- *Education and Care Services National Law Act, 2010 and Regulations 2011*
- *Family and Child Commission Act 2014*
- *Child Protection Act 1999 and Regulations 2000*
- *Duty of Care*
- *National Quality Standard 2.2 Each child is protected*
- *Policies: 2.1 – Respect for Children, 2.2 - Statement of Commitment to the Safety and Wellbeing of Children and the Protection of Children from Harm, 2.10 - Reporting Guidelines and Directions for Handling Disclosures and Suspicions of Harm, 3.3 – Educator Practices, 9.3 – Communication with Families, 9.6 – Parent and Community Participation.*



Procedures

Management, Coordinators/Responsible Person, and educators shall be committed to providing an environment that encourages children's personal safety and always promotes the wellbeing of all children.

Coordinators/Responsible Person and Educator's support children's personal safety through:

- Reinforcing protective behaviour strategies such as:
 - 'We all have the right to feel safe all of the time;' and
 - 'We can all talk with a trusted adult about anything even if it feels awful or small'
- Children are empowered to understand they have control, ownership and autonomy over their own bodies, the right to feel safe and be safe and respect the safety and boundaries of others.
- Building on children's problem solving, reasoning and communication skills (e.g., brainstorming safe strategies for unsafe situations).
- Help children create and identify a safety network of several trusted adults they can communicate with who will take action to help the child feel and be safe.

Coordinators/Responsible Person and Educators actively encourage children's personal safety behaviours in all sorts of situations including:

- Outside in the sun.
- Using the road while walking or riding.
- Being cautious and aware of strangers; and
- Who to go to for help if lost or feeling uncomfortable about an event or person
- Digital safety when navigating the internet, social media, and using artificial intelligence

Coordinators/Responsible Person and educators collaborate with families to ensure children's learning about personal safety is culturally appropriate.

Coordinators/Responsible Person liaise with school administration to develop awareness of personal safety programs provided within the school setting. These events are communicated to educators to prepare them for children's questions and/or comments.

The Coordinator/Responsible Person liaises with management and families to develop and implement strategies for providing opportunities for personal safety programs for children to be included as part of the service program.

References:

Teaching children protective strategies: Feel Safe, Be Safe (2023), Goodstart Early Learning, <https://www.goodstart.org.au/news/teaching-children-protective-strategies-feel-safe-be-safe>

Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) (2024), Center of Disease Control, <https://www.cdc.gov/aces/about/>

Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs): Summary of evidence and impacts (2020), Emerging Minds, National Workforce Centre for Child Mental Health, <https://d2p3kdr0nr4o3z.cloudfront.net/content/uploads/2020/02/19102540/ACES-Summary-of-Evidence-and-Impacts-V2.pdf>
<https://emergingminds.com.au/resources/adverse-childhood-experiences-aces-summary-of-evidence-and-impacts/>

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