

## **Child Safe Environments**

*National Law: Section 167 Regulation 168 (2)(h)*

*National Quality Standard 2.3, 7.1*

*The Children's Protection Act 1993 Section 6, 10 and 11 (SA)*



This policy reflects our commitment to provide a safe environment where every person has the right to be treated with respect and is safe and protected from abuse.

### **Recruitment of staff**

All reasonable steps are taken to ensure that we engage the most suitable and appropriate people to work with children. We employ a range of selection measures and apply best practice standards in the screening and recruitment of employees. These include but not limited to:

- Clear Job Position Descriptions outlining the services commitment to providing child safe environments (requirement to maintain valid child safe environment training at all times)
- Conducting referee checks on all employees relevant to child care (minimum of 2)
- A thorough interview process that explores the candidate's capacity to contribute to a safe and supportive environment including current child safe environment training

We comply with obligations under the State's Child protection legislation Act 1993 (Division 3 Section 8B) that requires people who work with children to:

- Have a current relevant history assessment prior to the commencement of employment.
- To have a Department of Communities and Social Inclusion (DCSI) screening as the only authorised screening method in South Australia.

All employees' details of the above must be current and records are kept and updated periodically  
Please Note: This is an expectation of employment with Kozy Kids.

### **Code of Conduct**

The Education and Care Service requires every employee to:

- Be ethical, fair and honest in all their dealings with children, their families and members of the community associated with the Education and Care Service
- Treat all those a part of the Education and Care Service with respect and courtesy and have proper regard for their dignity, rights and obligations
- Always place the safety and welfare of children above other considerations
- Comply with the National Quality Framework including National Law, National Regulations and other guidelines as stipulated by the relevant Regulatory Authority for their State including this child protection policy
- Comply with all relevant Australian laws (Federal and State), particularly anti-discrimination and child protection laws
- Be responsible and accountable for their conduct

### **Staff and Mandatory Reporting**

The legal requirement to report suspected cases of child abuse and neglect is known as *mandatory reporting*. People mandated to report and the abuse types for which it is mandatory to report vary across Australian states and territories.

South Australia Hotline **131478**. The Department will handle any investigation and liaise with the reporter as to the progress. [www.dsci.sa.gov.au](http://www.dsci.sa.gov.au)

In relation to State Specific guidelines for reporting of suspected abuse. If you become aware of or have a suspicion that abuse is occurring, make sure that you detail the conversation/ observations in writing as soon as possible. If you believe that the child is in immediate danger call 000.

Documentation and Confidentiality Records and processes regarding suspected abuse are to be kept confidential and not discussed with anyone other than directly relevant parties.

Those involved in the documentation process must ensure that the following is included for each report

- The date the report is made
- The child's details: name, age, date of birth etc.
- The reporter's details e.g. the educator's name, position in the service, contact details etc.
- Regarding the circumstances surrounding the report being made e.g. setting the scene, details of things observed, details of things discussed (remember these should be written as factually and accurately as possible)
- Reference to other documentation that is connected to the report if relevant
- Any correspondence (verbal, email, written) that was made with the relevant Child Protection Authority

*All reports are to be kept together in the child's individual file in a locked cupboard to ensure confidentiality.*

A number of policies and procedures have been developed to assist and minimise the risk of harm to the children in our care.

Some of these are as follows:

- Custody, access, collection and delivery of children policy
- Best Practice Guidelines
- Health and safety policy
- Concerns and grievances policy
- Employee health, hygiene and code of conduct policy
- Job descriptions and related staff
- Staff performance appraisal and disciplinary action policy
- Confidentiality and privacy policy
- Communication, respectful conduct and positive interactions policy

**When children disclose abuse/ neglect to an educator/employee the educator/employee will:**

- Remain calm and in control (despite how the child's disclosure makes a team member feel) and reassure the child that they have done the right thing by telling someone what has happened/ is happening
- Listening to them carefully
- Will not make any promises that they cannot keep
- Will not push children into giving details of the abuse or ask leading questions to attempt to investigate what the child has said
- Document the conversation and report the conversation to the Nominated Supervisor/ Responsible Person
- Educators/employee will remain observant and attentive to children's physical and emotional wellbeing
- If abuse is suspected or reported educators/employee will immediately report to the Nominated Supervisor/Responsible person and maintain their own written records
- If educators/employee believe that a child is in danger if released they will report this belief to the Nominated Supervisor/ Responsible person immediately
- The Education and Care Service will make all reasonable and legal attempts to avoid releasing a child into a potentially dangerous situation, and if this is not possible will notify the relevant Child Protection Authority

**If there is an allegation of abuse or neglect by an employee at the Service.**

Should an allegation be made regarding an employee the following must occur:

- The person witnessing the incident must make their concerns known to the Nominated Supervisor
- This notification must include times, dates and names of those involved as well as specific information regarding the incident
- Report any instances to the relevant State Child Protection Authority

***Policy Source Acknowledgements***

- The signs of safety- child protection practice framework
- Protective practices for staff in their interactions with children and young people – Government of South Australia
- National Child protection Resource Sheet August 2010 “Mandatory Reporting of Child Abuse and Neglect”
- Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010
- Education and Care Services National Regulations
- National Law Guide and National Regulations Guide
- National Quality Standards Guide Early Years Learning Framework