



CHCPRT001

**Identify and respond to children
and young people at risk**

Learner Guide

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Identify and respond to children and young people at risk

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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Unit of Competency

Application

This unit describes the skills and knowledge required to support and protect children and young people who are at risk of harm. This work occurs within legislative and policy frameworks and carries a duty of care responsibility.

This unit applies to workers in a range of job roles providing services to children and young people including in community services and health contexts.

The skills in this unit must be applied in accordance with Commonwealth and State/Territory legislation, Australian/New Zealand standards and industry codes of practice.

Performance Criteria

Element

Elements describe the essential outcomes.

Performance Criteria

Performance criteria describe the performance needed to demonstrate achievement of the element.

- | | |
|---|---|
| <p>1. Implement work practices which support the protection of children and young people</p> | <p>1.1 Identify children and young people at risk of abuse or neglect by observing signs and symptoms, asking open and non-leading questions, being aware of protective issues and using child protection procedures where appropriate.</p> <p>1.2 Respond to disclosure, information or signs and symptoms in accordance with state legislative responsibilities and the service policies and procedures.</p> <p>1.3 Routinely employ child-focused work practices to uphold the rights of the child and encourage them to participate in age-appropriate decision-making.</p> <p>1.4 Employ communication and information-gathering techniques with children and young people in accordance with current recognised good practice.</p> <p>1.5 Ensure decisions and actions taken are within own level of responsibility, work role, state legislation and service policies and procedures.</p> |
| <p>2. Report indications of possible risk of harm</p> | <p>2.1 Accurately record relevant specific and general circumstances surrounding risk of harm in accordance with state legislation, service policies and procedures and ethics.</p> <p>2.2 Promptly record and report risk-of-harm indicators, including the circumstances surrounding the risk of harm according to service policies and procedures.</p> <p>2.3 Ensure writing in reports is non-judgemental.</p> <p>2.4 Work collaboratively with relevant agencies to ensure maximum effectiveness of report.</p> |
| <p>3. Apply ethical and nurturing practices in work with children and young people</p> | <p>3.1 Protect the rights of children and young people in the provision of services.</p> <p>3.2 Identify and seek supervision support for issues of ethical concern in practice with children and young people.</p> <p>3.3 Employ ethical and nurturing practices and observe professional boundaries when working with children and young people.</p> <p>3.4 Recognise and report indicators for potential ethical concerns when working with children and young people.</p> |

Foundation Skills

The Foundation Skills describe those required skills (language, literacy, numeracy and employment skills) that are essential to performance.

Reading skills:

- In order to read and understand forms and to make accurate reports.

Writing skills:

- In order to record details of children and young people at risk and to make reports using handwritten skills and computer skills.

Other foundation skills essential to performance are explicit in the performance criteria of this unit.

Assessment Requirements

Performance Evidence

The candidate must show evidence of the ability to complete tasks outlined in elements and performance criteria of this unit, manage tasks and manage contingencies in the context of the job role. There must be demonstrated evidence that the candidate has completed the following tasks at least once:

- Implemented work practices which support the protection of children and young people, including:
 - complying with regulations, legislations and duty of care responsibilities
 - employing child-focused work practices to uphold the rights of children and young people
 - maintaining confidentiality
 - providing appropriate responses in the protection of children and young people
- Read and interpreted the procedures for reporting children at risk in line with organisational expectations and legislative requirements.

Knowledge Evidence

The candidate must be able to demonstrate essential knowledge required to effectively do the task outlined in elements and performance criteria of this unit, manage the task and manage contingencies in the context of the work role. These include knowledge of:

- Indicators of the different types and dynamics of abuse as they may apply to age, gender, disability, culture and sexuality
- Child protection legislation in the relevant state or territory
- United nations convention on the rights of the child
- Impact of risk of harm
- Duty of care responsibilities
- Trauma-informed care
- Ethical considerations including:
 - approaches that incorporate the conventions on the rights of the child, and human rights
 - obligations as defined by the job specification and employing organisation
 - obligations as stated in relevant codes of practice, licensing, accreditation registration to professional bodies, service agreements
 - principles of ethical decision-making
- Overview of legal system and how it pertains to the job role, in particular:
 - child protection system, including reporting protocols, responses to reporting and interagency policies
 - state/territory requirements and processes for notifying suspected abuse and reporting process
 - statutory and policy requirements relating to job role
- Organisation standards, policies and procedures.

Assessment Conditions

Skills must be demonstrated in the workplace.

In addition, simulations and scenarios must be used where the full range of contexts and situations cannot be provided in the workplace or may occur only rarely. These are situations relating to emergency or unplanned procedure where assessment in these circumstances would be unsafe or is impractical.

Simulated assessment environments must simulate the real-life working environment where these skills and knowledge would be performed, with all the relevant equipment and resources of that working environment.

Assessors must satisfy the Standards for Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) 2015/AQTF mandatory competency requirements for assessors.

Links

Companion volumes are available from the CS&HISC website -

http://companion_volumes.vetnet.education.gov.au/Pages/TrainingPackage.aspx?pid=7

1. Implement work practices which support the protection of children and young people

- 1.1.** Identify children and young people at risk of abuse or neglect by observing signs and symptoms, asking open and non-leading questions, being aware of protective issues and using child protection procedures where appropriate.
- 1.2.** Respond to disclosure, information or signs and symptoms in accordance with state legislative responsibilities and the service policies and procedures.
- 1.3.** Routinely employ child-focused work practices to uphold the rights of the child and encourage them to participate in age-appropriate decision-making.
- 1.4.** Employ communication and information-gathering techniques with children and young people in accordance with current recognised good practice.
- 1.5.** Ensure decisions and actions taken are within own level of responsibility, work role, state legislation and service policies and procedures.



1.1 – Identify children and young people at risk of abuse or neglect by observing signs and symptoms, asking open and non-leading questions, being aware of protective issues and using child protection procedures where appropriate

By the end of this chapter, the learner should be able to:

- Describe the signs and symptoms of child abuse and neglect
- Ask open and non-leading questions to find out the information needed
- Use the correct child protection procedures to report a child protection matter.

Signs and symptoms

When identifying children and young people at risk, it is important to observe the signs and symptoms that may indicate they are being abused or neglected. It can be difficult for young victims to talk about what is happening to them as they may be scared, embarrassed, may not understand it or know it is wrong. Children or young people experiencing abuse may show it through their behaviour, emotions or physically.

Child abuse

This is defined as any kind of behaviour that harms a child or young person physically or emotionally. It may have been a single incident or abuse that has been happening over a long time, and whether it was done intentionally or unintentionally, it is still classed as child abuse. Abuse is often said to be a violation of the child's rights where there is an implication of trust in the relationship.

There are different types of child abuse, including physical, emotional, sexual and neglect, and it is important that you understand what each one means.

The different types of child abuse are:

- Physical – this means using physical force to hurt or injure a child intentionally. Children or young people experiencing this type of abuse are likely to show physical signs such as cuts, bruises, fractures or burns.
- Emotional – this means using inappropriate words or symbolic acts to hurt or damage a child emotionally and mentally. For example, this may involve name calling, rejecting them, frightening them or putting them down and making them lack confidence.
- Sexual – this is when a person uses power or authority to involve a child or young person in sexual activity. This can involve physical force, and a range of sexual acts including touching the child's genitals, masturbation, oral sex, vaginal or anal penetration or exposure to pornography.
- Neglect – this means failing to provide the child with the basic necessities they need such as food, clothing, shelter, medical attention or supervision. Without these necessities, a child's physical and emotional development and wellbeing will be



seriously affected. They may be starved, underweight, have little clothing or may have cuts or illnesses that have not been treated.

- Witnessing domestic violence – this is when a child experiences a parent or sibling being subjected to abuse or experiences the damage caused to a person or property by violent behaviour.

Modified from sources: <https://www.healthdirect.gov.au/child-abuse> and <http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/for-individuals/children,-families-and-young-people/child-protection/about-child-abuse/what-is-child-abuse>. Accessed on 18/10/2016.

In most cases, children are abused by their parents or carers of either sex, but it could also be a family member, friend or someone from school or the local area. Abuse can damage a child in many ways and can affect them through to adulthood. If a child or young person is unhappy or stressed, then this will usually affect how they behave. These behavioural or physical signs are known as indicators, and it is important that you can recognise the signs and find out what the root cause is.

However, if a child displays any of these behaviours, it doesn't necessarily mean they are being abused; it is also important to take into consideration their age and vulnerabilities. For example, they may have a disability or illness that causes certain behaviour or symptoms. The lists below are not exhaustive, but they are indicators to look out for.

Some indicators of child abuse include:

- Being wary or distrusting of adults
- Rocking, sucking or biting excessively
- Bedwetting or soiling
- Demanding or aggressive behaviour
- Sleeping difficulties – tired and falling asleep
- Low self-esteem and confidence
- Difficulty relating to adults and peers
- Abusing alcohol or drugs
- Being accident prone
- Broken bones or unexplained bruising, burns or welts in different stages of healing
- Being unable to explain any injuries, or providing unbelievable or vague explanations
- Feeling suicidal or attempting to commit suicide
- Having difficulty concentrating or focusing
- Being withdrawn



- Being overly obedient
- Reluctant to go home
- Creating stories, poems or artwork about abuse.

Some indicators of neglect include:

- Malnutrition, begging, stealing or hoarding food
- Poor hygiene, matted hair, dirty unwashed skin or body odour
- Unattended physical or medical problems
- Comments from the child indicating no one is home to look after them or they are not being cared for properly
- Being constantly tired or unable to focus
- Frequent lateness, absence or truancy from school
- Inappropriate clothing for the time of year
- Ripped, damaged or old clothing
- Frequent illnesses, infections or sores
- Being left unsupervised for long periods.



Lists modified from source:

<https://www.communities.qld.gov.au/childsafety/protecting-children/what-is-child-abuse/signs-of-child-abuse-and-neglect>. Accessed on 18/10/2016.

Asking questions

Children or young people experiencing abuse often struggle to talk and communicate about it, especially if they are very young, so it can be difficult to find out the information you need. It is best to use open and non-leading questions to make them feel more comfortable and encourage them to give reliable answers. These questions usually start with what, why, where or how, prompting a response more than yes or no so you can find out what the child knows and what they are feeling.

Examples of open and non-leading questions to ask:

- When did this happen?
- What did the person do?
- Can you tell me a bit more about that?
- Have you told anyone else about this?
- Where did this happen?
- How did it make you feel?

Modified from source:

<https://www.eduweb.vic.gov.au/edulibrary/public/stuman/wellbeing/discloseguide.pdf>. Accessed on 18/10/2016.

You should avoid asking children leading and direct questions as it can confuse them or make them feel uncomfortable and stop them from speaking to you. The questions are often too direct and are inappropriate to use when discussing this matter with a child.

If you are unable to speak to the child, it is worth speaking to the parents and asking them questions as you may be able to judge by their responses or body language whether there is anything you should be concerned about.

Child protection procedures

It is important if you have any concerns or worries about a child or young person that you contact a local Child Protection Service and ask them for assistance and advice. Statutory child protection in Australia is the responsibility of state and territory governments. This information is stated on the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare government website:

‘Departments responsible for child protection will provide assistance to vulnerable children who are suspected of being abused, neglected or harmed, or whose parents are unable to provide adequate care or protection. Contacts made to these departments regarding allegations of child abuse or neglect, child maltreatment or harm to a child is called notifications.’

Source: <http://www.aihw.gov.au/child-protection/>. Accessed on 18/10/2016.

Notifications

Notifications made to these departments will be assessed to determine if intervention is required and to what level. The investigation will involve the department obtaining more detailed information about the child, and making an assessment about the level of harm to the child and their protective needs. This may involve meeting and interviewing the child if it is practical to do so. The aim of the investigation is to determine whether the notification is substantiated or not substantiated. A substantiation would indicate ‘there is sufficient reason to believe that a child has been, is being, or is likely to be, abused, neglected or otherwise harmed.’

Source: <http://www.aihw.gov.au/child-protection/>. Accessed on 18/10/2016.

Protecting children

The department would then try to ensure the safety of the child through an appropriate level of involvement. The child may be placed on a care and protection order, which is a legal order giving child protection departments some responsibility for a child’s welfare. Or, they may also be placed into out of home care, which is overnight care for children up to 17 years old.

Reporting a child protection matter

To report a child protection matter, you should contact the relevant agency responsible for child protection in your state or territory. However, if a child is in immediate danger or a life-threatening situation, you would need to call 000.



Here is a list of the child protection authorities across states and territories in Australia:

(Source: Child protection agencies (AIHW). (n.d.). Retrieved from <http://www.aihw.gov.au/child-protection/agencies/>)

State/Territory	Department	Website/contact
New South Wales	Department of Family & Community Services	Tel. 132 111 www.community.nsw.gov.au/preventing-child-abuse-and-neglect/reporting-suspected-abuse-or-neglect
Victoria	Department of Health and Human Services	Tel. 131 278 (after hours emergency) www.dhs.vic.gov.au/for-individuals/crisis-and-emergency/reporting-child-abuse
Queensland	Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services	Tel. (07) 3235 9999 or 1800 177 135 (after hours and weekends) www.communities.qld.gov.au/childsafety/protecting-children/reporting-child-abuse
Western Australia	Department for Child Protection and Family Support	Tel. 1800 622 258 a/h: (08) 9223 1111 or 1800 199 008 www.dcp.wa.gov.au/Organisation/contactUs/Pages/ContactUs.aspx
South Australia	Department for Education and Child Development	Tel. 131 478 www.families.sa.gov.au/pages/protectingchildren/ReportingChildAbuse
Tasmania	Department of Health and Human Services	Tel. 1300 737 639 www.dhhs.tas.gov.au/children/child_protection_services
Australian Capital Territory	Community Services Directorate	Tel. 1300 556 729 www.communityservices.act.gov.au/ocyfs/reporting-child-abuse-and-neglect
Northern Territory	Office of Children and Families	Tel. 1800 700 250 www.childrenandfamilies.nt.gov.au/Contacts/index.aspx

1.2 – Respond to disclosure, information or signs and symptoms in accordance with state legislative responsibilities and the service policies and procedures

By the end of this chapter, the learner should be able to:

- Respond to disclosure of child abuse appropriately
- Explain what mandatory reporting means and how it applies to different states and territories
- List the policies and procedures at your workplace.

Responding to disclosure

When a child or young person has been abused or is being abused, it is often very difficult for them to talk about it and tell someone how they feel. This can be for a number of reasons and could also depend on their age and the severity of the abuse. For example, they may feel uncomfortable, scared, embarrassed or guilty. If they are very young, they may not understand what has happened and may not realise how serious it is, or the abuser may have made them believe it is their fault. Being abused or neglected can also cause young people to have low self-esteem and confidence, which would make it even more difficult for them to talk to someone and report it.



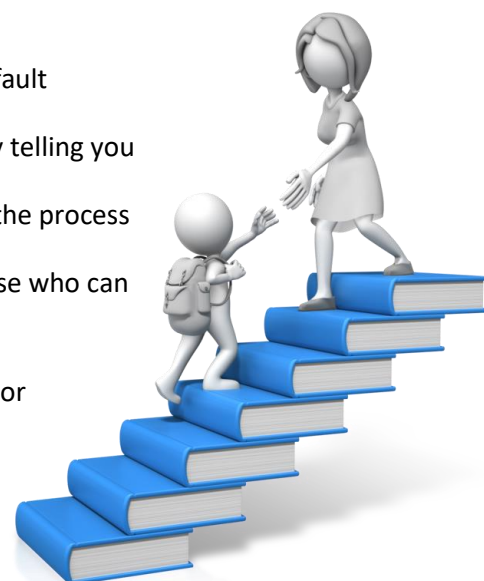
They may also be worried about the repercussions of them telling someone, especially if the abuser has threatened them, or if the abuser is a member of their family and they don't want to report them. Therefore, they may ask that anything they tell you remains a secret; however, it is extremely important that any child protection matters are reported, so it would not be possible to do this. In this situation, the best thing to do is to reassure the child and encourage them to speak out about what has happened.

If a child or young person tells you they have been abused or neglected, it is important to first consider how they must be feeling and to make them feel safe and supported in your company. You should explain to them that they have done the right thing and ensure they don't feel guilty or ashamed for speaking to you. It is also important that you remain calm and conceal any emotions you may be feeling as it could make them feel worse. Let them know that you are there to listen to them and help them.

How to manage a disclosure of abuse or neglect:

- Keep your emotions under control; stay calm and don't express that you are shocked, disgusted, angry or upset
- Ask open and non-leading questions to get the right responses
- Listen carefully and be understanding
- Take the child seriously and let them know that you believe them

- Communicate with them in a way that they will understand; don't use complicated words or terminology
- Make sure they know what has happened isn't their fault
- Reassure them that they have done the right thing by telling you
- Tell the child that you will support them throughout the process
- Explain to them that you will need to tell someone else who can help them
- Allow them to talk at their own pace; don't be pushy or pressure them
- Ensure you make notes throughout or after the child has left so that you remember everything.



Modified from source:

<https://www.eduweb.vic.gov.au/edulibrary/public/stuman/wellbeing/discloseguide.pdf>
f. Accessed on 18/10/2016.

A disclosure may happen when you least expect it. It will most likely happen if a child or young person feels safe with you and trusts you, as they will feel more comfortable. Any disclosed incidents of abuse or neglect must be reported to the relevant persons, and you should follow your workplace's procedure for reporting child protection matters. If you suspect any child or young person is being abused or neglected but you are unsure about reporting it, remember that you have a responsibility to the child and by reporting it you would be helping them and preventing them from coming to any harm. You should explain to the child or young person what will happen next and make sure they are fully aware of the process you need to take. It is important that they are in the know as this will prevent them from worrying about it and make them feel safer.

Mandatory reporting

This is a legislative requirement for people working in certain roles to report suspected abuse and neglect to government child protection services in Australia. The mandatory reporting laws are different across states and territories, with the main differences concerning who has to report, and the types of abuse and neglect that have to be reported. The occupations that are most commonly named as mandated reporters are those that involve dealing with children on a frequent basis, such as teachers, doctors, nurses and police. This means that people working in these roles would be legally required to report any suspicions of abuse. It generally states that except for sexual abuse, in which case all suspicions must be reported, it is only cases of significant abuse and neglect that must be reported.

Modified from source: <https://aifs.gov.au/cfca/publications/mandatory-reporting-child-abuse-and-neglect>. Accessed on 18/10/2016.

Below is a guide by the Australian Institute of Family Studies stating who the mandatory reporters are in different states and territories and what they must report:

State/Territory	Mandatory reporters	What must be reported
New South Wales	<p>A person who, in the course of his or her professional work or other paid employment delivers, or supervises the provision of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Healthcare ➤ Welfare ➤ Education ➤ Children's services ➤ Residential services or law enforcement, wholly or partly, to children. 	<p>Reasonable grounds to suspect that a child is at risk of significant harm and those grounds arise during the course of or from the person's work.</p>
Victoria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Registered medical practitioners, midwives, registered nurses ➤ Teachers registered under the Education, Training and Reform Act 2006 or teachers granted permission to teach under that Act ➤ Principals of government or non-government schools ➤ Members of the police force. 	<p>Belief on reasonable grounds that a child is in need of protection on a ground referred to in Section 162(c) or 162(d), formed in the course of practising his or her office, position or employment.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Physical abuse ➤ Sexual abuse
Queensland	<p>A doctor or registered nurse</p>	<p>Awareness or reasonable suspicion during the practice of his or her profession of harm or risk of harm.</p>
	<p>School staff</p>	<p>Awareness or reasonable suspicion that a child has been or is likely to be sexually abused; and the suspicion is formed in the course of the person's employment.</p>
	<p>An authorised officer, employee of the Department of Child Safety, a person employed in a departmental care service or licensed care service.</p>	<p>Awareness or reasonable suspicion of harm caused to a child placed in the care of an entity conducting a departmental care service or a licensee.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Physical abuse ➤ Sexual abuse or exploitation ➤ Emotional/psychological abuse ➤ Neglect

Western Australia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Doctors ➤ Nurses and midwives ➤ Teachers ➤ Police officers 	Belief on reasonable grounds that child sexual abuse has occurred or is occurring.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Court personnel ➤ Family counsellors ➤ Family dispute resolution practitioners, arbitrators or legal practitioners representing the child's interests. 	<p>Reasonable grounds for suspecting that a child has been:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Physically or sexually abused, or is at risk of being abused. ➤ Ill-treated, or is at risk of being ill- treated. ➤ Exposed or subjected to behaviour that psychologically harms the child.
South Australia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Doctors ➤ Pharmacists ➤ Registered or enrolled nurses ➤ Dentists ➤ Psychologists ➤ Police officers ➤ Community corrections officers ➤ Social workers ➤ Teachers in educational institutions including kindergartens ➤ Family day care providers ➤ Employees/volunteers in a government department, agency or instrumentality, or a local government or non-government agency that provides health, welfare, education, sporting or recreational, child care or residential services wholly or partly for children; ministers of religion (with the exception of disclosures made in the confessional) <p>Employees or volunteers in a religious or spiritual organisation.</p>	<p>Reasonable grounds to suspect that a child has been or is being abused or neglected; and the suspicion is formed in the course of the person's work (whether paid or voluntary) or carrying out official duties.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Physical abuse ➤ Sexual abuse ➤ Emotional/psychological abuse ➤ Neglect
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Registered medical practitioners, nurses, midwives ➤ Dentists, dental therapists or dental hygienists ➤ Registered psychologists ➤ Police officers ➤ Probation officers 	<p>A belief, suspicion, reasonable grounds or knowledge that a child has been or is being abused or neglected or is an affected child within the meaning of the Family Violence Act 2004.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Physical abuse ➤ Sexual abuse ➤ Emotional/psychological abuse

<p>Tasmania</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Principals and teachers in any educational institution including kindergartens ➤ Persons who provide child care or a child care service for fee or reward ➤ Persons concerned in the management of a child care service licensed under the Child Care Act 2001 ➤ Any other person who is employed or engaged as an employee for, of, or in, or who is a volunteer in, a government agency that provides health, welfare, education, child care or residential services wholly or partly for children, and an organisation that receives any funding from the Crown for the provision of such services; and any other person of a class determined by the Minister by notice in the Gazette to be prescribed persons. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Neglect <p>Exposure to family violence</p>
<p>Australian Capital Territory</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Doctors ➤ Dentists ➤ Nurses, enrolled nurses ➤ Midwives ➤ Teachers ➤ Person providing education to a child or young person who is registered, or provisionally registered, for home education under the Education Act 2004 ➤ Police officer ➤ Person employed to counsel children or young people at a school ➤ Person caring for a child at a child care centre ➤ Person coordinating or monitoring home-based care for a family day care scheme proprietor ➤ Public servant who, in the course of employment as a public servant, works with, or provides services 	<p>A belief, on reasonable grounds, that a child or young person has experienced or is experiencing sexual abuse or non-accidental physical injury and the belief arises from information obtained by the person during the course of, or because of, the person's work (whether paid or unpaid).</p>

	<p>personally to, children and young people or families</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The public advocate ➤ An official visitor <p>Person who, in the course of their employment, has contact with or provides services to children, young people, and their families and is prescribed by regulation.</p>	
Northern Territory	Any person	<p>A belief on reasonable grounds that a child has suffered or is likely to suffer harm or exploitation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Physical abuse ➤ Sexual abuse ➤ Emotional/psychological abuse ➤ Neglect ➤ Exposure to physical violence (e.g., a child witnessing violence between parents at home)
	Registered Health Professionals	<p>Reasonable grounds to believe a child aged 14 or 15 years has been or is likely to be a victim of a sexual offence, and the age difference between the child and offender is greater than 2 years.</p>

Source: <https://aifs.gov.au/cfca/publications/mandatory-reporting-child-abuse-and-neglect>. Accessed on 18/10/2016.

Policies and procedures

There will be policies and procedures to follow at your workplace to encourage a safe, friendly and supportive environment for children. A child protection manual provides guidance for professionals working with vulnerable children and young people. It will reflect the legislative requirements of the Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 and will also contain knowledge and practice requirements for child protection in different states and territories. Your workplace will also have a Code of Conduct, which will state the behaviour and values expected from staff that are supporting, caring and working with children and young people. There will also be a Duty of Care statement, which will outline the organisations responsibility and commitment to keeping children and young people safe.

<http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/for-service-providers/children,-youth-and-families/child-protection/child-protection-practice-manual-online>

1.3 – Routinely employ child-focused work practices to uphold the rights of the child and encourage them to participate in age-appropriate decision-making

By the end of this chapter, the learner should be able to:

- Employ child-focused work practices in the workplace
- List and describe the rights of children
- Identify and list ways to encourage children to participate in decision-making.

Child-focused work practice

People working with children have a responsibility and duty to provide a safe environment for them. They can have a big impact on children's lives and development, so it is important to consider and uphold the children's needs and rights and adapt these to the workplace. Being child-focused is based around the belief that 'every child or young person has the right to a safe passage through childhood and the right to grow in an environment free from harm.' It also means that 'the child's needs and welfare are the primary concern and the primary focus of practice. Professional knowledge and practice need to be examined in terms of the potential for furthering the best interests of children and young people.'

Source: https://www.det.nsw.edu.au/proflearn/cpat/documents/cpat_sec3.pdf. Accessed on 18/10/2016.

Child-focused practice includes:

- Listening to the child or young person
- Being understanding with them and trying to see things from their point of view
- Showing that you believe the child or young person and take them seriously
- Respecting them and their wishes
- Communicating with them on their level
- Treating them as an individual with rights
- Having realistic expectations
- Showing empathy and being patient
- Focusing on the child's or young person's needs
- Making sure they participate in decision making
- Maintaining appropriate boundaries
- Accommodating special needs and different cultures
- Promoting positive experiences and outcomes



- Making sure services are relevant, accessible and child-friendly.

Modified from source:

https://www.det.nsw.edu.au/proflearn/cpat/documents/cpat_sec3.pdf. Accessed on 18/10/2016.

Children's rights

Children have the same human rights as adults, and they also have the right to additional special protection due to their vulnerability to exploitation and abuse. The main international human rights treaty on children's rights is the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) which Australia ratified in 1990. This means that Australia and other countries worldwide have a duty to ensure that all children enjoy these rights. The convention sets out the civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights that all children are entitled to.

The core principles in the CRC, as stated by the Australian Human Rights Commission, are:

- Respect for the best interests of the child as a primary consideration
- The right to survival and development
- The right of all children to express their views freely on all matters affecting them
- The right of all children to enjoy the rights of the CRC without discrimination.

The Convention ensures that all children and young people are viewed as being entitled to the same human rights as adults with additional special protection. It also encourages children's participation and allows their voices to be heard, so they have the right to form and express their own opinions.

Sources: <https://www.humanrights.gov.au/our-work/childrens-rights/about-childrens-rights> and <http://www.unicef.org.uk/UNICEFs-Work/UN-Convention/>. Accessed on 18/10/2016.

Decision-making

It is important that children and young people are given the opportunity to participate in age-appropriate decision-making to help them develop new skills and to give them a sense of responsibility. It is also important to be able to show them that they are taken seriously and have the same human rights as an adult. This will encourage them to form their own opinions and express how they feel.

Below are some ways you can encourage decision-making:

- Offer them choices in everyday scenarios
- Ask them for help in choosing things
- Allow them to make decisions whenever possible
- Encourage them to interact with other children
- Teach them problem-solving skills
- Talk to them and ask what their interests are.



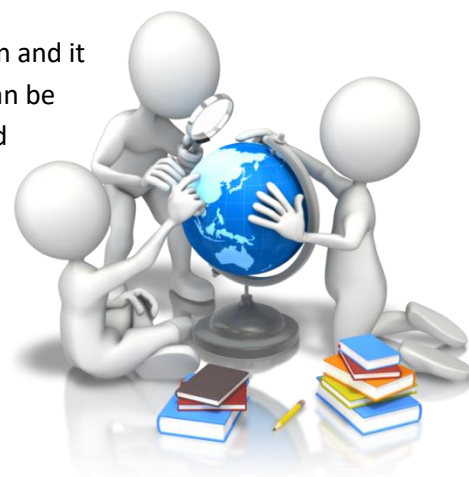
1.4 – Employ communication and information-gathering techniques with children and young people in accordance with current recognised good practice

By the end of this chapter, the learner should be able to:

- Communicate with children and young people effectively
- Use effective information-gathering techniques when communicating.

Good communication

Communication is important for building trust and respect with children and it will help you find out what they are thinking and feeling. However, it can be difficult communicating with children, getting your message across, and finding out the information you need. They may not always understand what you are asking, or give reliable answers. For example, if you ask something direct like ‘did your parents do this to you’, this would be a leading question which could cause them to say yes even if it wasn’t true. So it is best to ask open and non-leading questions, such as ‘how did you get that bruise?’ in order to get the best response and make them feel more comfortable.



The principles for communicating with children:

- It should be age-appropriate and child-friendly – using appropriate language, characters, stories, music, and humour is important when communicating with children. They will all have different needs and interests and will learn in different ways so it is important to treat them as an individual and think of the best way to communicate.
- It should address the child holistically – all aspects of child development are interconnected, such as physical, social, emotional and cognitive. Communication should balance and give attention to their specific development needs.
- It should be positive and strengths-based – communication should focus on portraying and nurturing the child’s strengths and potential, instead of their problems. This will help the child to build self-confidence and competence, allowing them to be more imaginative and see possibilities.
- It should address the needs and abilities of all – communication should help the child to see themselves positively and equal to others. It should positively portray and value all children from different cultures, ethnic groups and backgrounds.

Source: <http://www.unicef.org/cwc/>. Accessed on 18/10/2016.

Information-gathering techniques

When communicating and gathering information from a child, it is important to provide them with the support they need and to be patient. You may not be able to gather all the information you need in one conversation as it could be too much for the child to take and they may struggle to pay attention. Make sure you sit down and talk to children at their eye-level, and if they don't want to make eye contact with you when they are talking, you could play a game together to give them something to do. Use open and non-leading questions when talking to them and get them to tell you about things instead of assuming, for example, instead of asking them 'are you scared and unhappy at home' say, 'how do you feel when you're at home'. Actively listen to them throughout the conversation and let them know that you believe what they're saying.

Tips for communicating and information-gathering with children:

- Talk to the child at their eye level, so you're not looking down on them
- Keep them occupied throughout the conversation by playing a game
- Use open and non-leading questions when speaking to them
- Lean towards them to show empathy and make them feel more comfortable
- Make eye contact with them when you can
- Sit comfortably and relax while you're talking to them
- Be patient and allow them time to talk
- If they seem uncomfortable or they're losing interest, don't be pushy with them
- Make notes whenever you can so you remember what they said.



Once you have gathered enough information and reasonably believe that the child is being abused or neglected, this would need to be reported to your supervisor or manager and a child protection agency. They will need to interview the child again, so it is best not to spend too long talking to the child and asking them questions as they will have to go through it again. If the child is too young and isn't yet verbal, you would need to observe them and look out for any signs and symptoms of abuse to be able to assess whether something needs to be reported. In this case, you may also need to speak to their parents and gather more information from them to make the decision.

1.5 – Ensure decisions and actions taken are within own level of responsibility, work role, state legislation and service policies and procedures

By the end of this chapter, the learner should be able to:

- Make decisions within own role and level of responsibility
- Access and apply the relevant legislation for your state or territory
- List the policies and procedures put in place by your organisation.

Your role and responsibility

When making any decisions, you should make sure this falls within your role and responsibilities which will be specified in your code of conduct. You will need to be clear on the policies and procedures at your workplace and ensure everything you do is legal and ethical. If you're not sure about the correct policies, you should check with your supervisor or manager before acting on anything or making any decisions that could affect you or the organisation. When working with children, you will have certain responsibilities to uphold so it is important that you know and understand what these are.



If you suspect a child or young person is being abused or neglected, or the child has disclosed this to you, you should use the information you have gathered to report it. Once it has been reported, the authorities will interview the child to investigate it. In this situation, you would need to be careful not to cross the line and do more than your job role entitles. For example, you should not stop the child from going home or try to make contact with the abuser. This would be interfering and could make things worse for yourself and the child. Your job role should entail keeping the child safe while at your workplace or in your care and reporting any issues to the appropriate person. Authorities and agencies will be trained and specialise in dealing with these cases and speaking to children, so it is important that you leave that part to them. You should also keep the information to yourself and the relevant people and don't discuss the details with anyone else.

Duty of care

People working with children and young people have a special duty of care to them. This is an element of the tort of negligence, which states that if a child or young person suffers injury as the result of the negligence of another person, they should be compensated for the loss and damage caused by this. To successfully claim for negligence, it must be established that, on the balance of probabilities:

- A duty of care was owed to the person harmed at the time of the injury
- The risk of injury was foreseeable
- The likelihood of the injury occurring was more than insignificant
- There was a breach of the duty of care or a failure to observe a reasonable standard of care

- This breach or failure was a cause of the injury.

It is important that people working in caregiving roles provide a high level of care to children and young people and take all reasonable steps to reduce risk, such as:

- Provision of suitable and safe premises
- Provision of an adequate system of supervision
- Implementation of strategies to prevent bullying
- Ensuring that medical assistance is provided to a sick or injured student
- Managing employee recruitment, conduct and performance.

Modified from source:

<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/safety/Pages/dutyofcare.aspx>

. Accessed on 24/10/2016.

State legislation

Whichever state or territory you live in; there are legislation relating to children's education and care that you will need to follow. You should be aware of the legislation to make sure you carry out your role in a legal, safe and ethical manner. In Victoria, the Education and Care Service National Law Act 2010 was passed and it was also adopted by other jurisdictions through an Application Act or passed corresponding legislation.

Below is the legislation and Application Act that applies in each state or territory:

State or Territory	Legislation	Application Act
Victoria	Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010	
New South Wales		Children (Education and Care Services National Law Application) Act 2010
Australian Capital Territory		Education and Care Services National Law (ACT) Act 2011
Northern Territory		Education and Care Services (National Uniform Legislation) ACT 2011
South Australia		Education and Early Childhood Services (Registration and Standards) Act 2011

Tasmania		Education and Care Services National Law (Application) Act 2011
Queensland	Education and Care Services National Law (Queensland) Act 2011	
Western Australia	Education and Care Services National Law (WA) Act 2012	

Source: <http://www.acecqa.gov.au/national-quality-framework/national-law-and-regulations/national-law>. Accessed on 18/10/2016.

The National Quality Framework is a national system for the regulation and quality assessment of child care and early learning services. The National Quality Standard sets the benchmark for the quality of education and care services and promotes the safety, health, and wellbeing of children by assessing and rating approved services.

The framework includes the following quality areas:

- Educational programme and practice
- Children's health and safety
- Physical environment
- Staffing arrangements
- Relationships with children
- Collaborative partnerships with families and communities
- Leadership and service management.

Modified from source: <https://www.education.gov.au/legislation-ratings-and-standards-information-national-quality-framework-nqf>. Accessed on 18/10/2016.

Policies and procedures

In addition to state legislation, you will have policies and procedures set out by your organisation that you will be expected to follow on a daily basis. The policies and procedures are there to ensure that everyone working for the organisation understands and applies the organisation's values, processes, and rules in their everyday role and abides by them. The policy framework is a written, formal statement which contains agreed standards that everyone should follow who is employed by the organisation. The framework should be referred to regularly as it will help you to determine what actions and decisions you should make in the role.



2. Report indications of possible risk of harm

- 2.1.** Accurately record relevant specific and general circumstances surrounding risk of harm in accordance with state legislation, service policies and procedures, and ethics.
- 2.2.** Promptly record and report risk-of-harm indicators, including the circumstances surrounding the risk of harm according to service policies and procedures.
- 2.3.** Ensure writing in reports is non-judgemental.
- 2.4.** Work collaboratively with relevant agencies to ensure maximum effectiveness of report.



2.1 – Accurately record relevant specific and general circumstances surrounding risk of harm in accordance with state legislation, service policies and procedures and ethics

2.2 – Promptly record and report risk-of-harm indicators, including the circumstances surrounding the risk of harm according to service policies and procedures

By the end of this chapter, the learner should be able to:

- Look out for signs or symptoms of abuse in children and young people
- Accurately record any details indicating child abuse or neglect
- Record and report any risk-of-harm indicators promptly to help the child and prevent further harm.

Accurately record

If you suspect a child or young person is being abused or neglected, you should record any details or information that could be risk of harm indicators. This is any information or circumstances that have led you to believe that a child or young person is in danger of being harmed. It is important that the information is detailed, recorded clearly and accurately, and that the report contains everything required. This information should be kept confidential and not shared with anyone other than your supervisor/manager and the authorities.



What you should record when reporting child abuse:

- Any signs or symptoms of different types of abuse, such as physical, sexual, psychological and neglect – make sure you give detailed descriptions of anything you have noticed or know about, and any comments from the child about cuts and bruises they have etc. (refer to criteria 1.1 for signs and symptoms of abuse).
- Any disclosures from the child – if a child reports to you that they have been abused you should make sure you write exactly what they have said and the date and time of the disclosure, so you don't get any of the details wrong and report anything inaccurately.
- Write down any questions and answers from conversations you have had with the child – this will show the information-gathering technique you used when talking to them to make sure it was appropriate and to see if the answers are reliable enough.
- Detailed descriptions of any injuries or illnesses the child has that are believed to be caused by the abuse or neglect.

- Describe any behavioural problems the child has that you have experienced when they have been in your care.
- State whether you believe the child is in danger and whether the abuse is ongoing.
- You may also need to record details about the child's family – any history you know about them, living situations, health problems and addictions etc.
- Details of the suspected abuser if you know who it could be.

Report risk-of-harm indicators

When working with children and young people you have a duty of care to them so it is important to be alert and look out for any signs or symptoms that could indicate that they have been harmed. Noticing these signs and symptoms early and taking the appropriate course of action could prevent any further harm to the child in the future. The list below is not exhaustive but these are the common risk of harm indicators that you may notice.



It is important to look out for:

- Physical signs of physical, sexual or emotional abuse or neglect – if you notice any marks or cuts on the child that they can't explain, or the story is not believable
- Behavioural signs of physical, sexual or emotional abuse or neglect – if they seem to be behaving unusually or in a disruptive way
- Disclosures by the child or young person – anything they report to you should be written down in detail and reported further to your supervisor/manager and the relevant authorities.

It is important to remember that not all indicators are due to abuse or neglect. For example, other issues such as witnessing a traumatic event, health problems and behavioural problems can also seriously affect a child or young person and these should be reported to other relevant organisations that can help them.

Your job would be to notify the relevant authorities, and once any incidents of child abuse have been reported, it will be the child protection worker who will do the interviewing and risk assessment by going through the information that has been gathered, and they will determine whether or not there is a risk of harm to the child.

Modified from source: <http://www.secasa.com.au/pages/defining-and-identifying-child-abuse/indicators-of-harm/>. Accessed on 18/10/2016.

2.3 – Ensure writing in reports is non-judgemental / 2.4 – Work collaboratively with relevant agencies to ensure maximum effectiveness of report

By the end of this chapter, the learner should be able to:

- Write reports accurately in a non-judgemental way
- Work collaboratively with the relevant agencies when writing the report and ask them for assistance if needed
- Check through the report when it is finished and ensure effectiveness.

Writing reports

When writing reports, it is important to write everything down accurately and check the details over before submitting. You should write reports in a timely manner, so you can remember everything clearly and include all the important details to allow the process to run as smoothly as possible.

All reports should be written in an objective and professional way, stating only the facts and leaving out any of your own judgements and opinions. This will ensure that the report is clear to read and contains only the important information that is required. Everything in the report should be detailed, providing as much information as possible to help the agencies understand what has happened and investigate it.

You should work collaboratively with the relevant agencies to make the report as accurate and effective as possible. If you have to attend a court hearing and provide further details, your report can be used to refer to. The agencies will know what they expect to see in an effective report and the type of information that is required for the investigation, so it is a good idea to contact them if you're unsure about what to include or how to record it and ask them for assistance.



How to ensure your report is effective and non-judgemental:

- Only include the facts and leave out any guesses
- If you're reporting what the child has said, write it word for word and don't add anything to it
- Don't include any judgements or perceptions
- Be specific and clear
- Describe everything in detail
- Contact agencies for help and advice if you're struggling with writing the report
- Answer any further questions the agency may have accurately.

3. Apply ethical and nurturing practices in work with children and young people

- 3.1.** Protect the rights of children and young people in the provision of services.
- 3.2.** Identify and seek supervision support for issues of ethical concern in practice with children and young people.
- 3.3.** Employ ethical and nurturing practices and observe professional boundaries when working with children and young people.
- 3.4.** Recognise and report indicators for potential ethical concerns when working with children and young people.



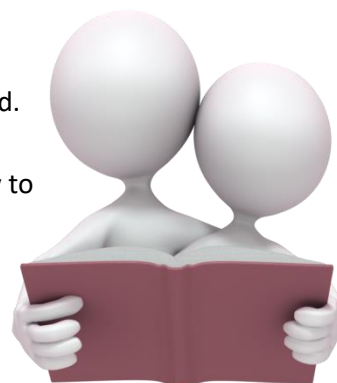
3.1 – Protect the rights of children and young people in the provision of services

By the end of this chapter, the learner should be able to:

- List and explain the rights of children and young people
- Explain the core principles in the Convention on the Right of the Child
- Explain the rights of children in early years settings.

Children’s rights

It is important that anyone providing services to children and young people understand and protect their rights. They should work with the child’s best interests in mind and set a good example for how children should be treated. As stated in criteria 1.1, children and young people have the same human rights as adults, and the right to special protection due to their vulnerability to exploitation and abuse. The main international human rights treaty on children’s rights is the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) which Australia ratified in 1990. This means that Australia and other countries worldwide have a duty to ensure that all children enjoy these rights. The convention sets out the civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights that all children are entitled to.



The core principles in the CRC, as stated by the Australian Human Rights Commission, are:

- Respect for the best interests of the child as a primary consideration
- The right to survival and development
- The right of all children to express their views freely on all matters affecting them
- The right of all children to enjoy all the rights of the CRC without discrimination of any kind.

The Convention ensures that all children and young people, regardless of whether they have a disability or illness, are viewed as being entitled to the same human rights as adults with additional special protection. It also encourages children’s participation and allows their voices to be heard, so they have the right to form and express their own opinions when decisions are made that could affect their lives.

Sources: <https://www.humanrights.gov.au/our-work/childrens-rights/about-childrens-rights> and <http://www.unicef.org.uk/UNICEFs-Work/UN-Convention/>. Accessed on 18/10/2016.

Early years settings

The UN Convention of the Rights of the Child also states the rights that are specific to working with children in the early years. These rights apply to all children around the world. The early years are a very important time for a child as they are constantly learning and developing, so it is important that those who are working with children have their best interests at heart, are aware of their rights and make sure children are protected by them on a daily basis. They should also make sure children are aware of their

own rights by incorporating them into curriculum and activities so that children can learn what is and isn't acceptable and feel valued. This will help children and young people to have the best start in life.

Children's rights in early years settings include:

- Children have right to live and should have a name
- Children should live with their parents or someone who cares for them
- Children should be listened to and be able to say what they think about things
- Children should be able to find out things
- Children should be able to worship as they wish
- Children should be able to meet together and have friends
- Children should be safe from harm. No child should be hurt by a grown-up or child
- Children in need of special care should get it
- Children should have clean water, food that is good for them, a clean place to live and good health care
- Children should be able to go to school
- Children should be allowed to play
- Children should not be allowed to do dangerous work
- Children should be protected from activities which stop them from growing up in a healthy happy way
- Everyone, children and adults, should know about children's rights.



Modified from source:

<http://www.centreforglobaleducation.org/includes/documents/ChildrensRightsintheEarlyYearsSetting.pdf>. Accessed on 19/10/2016.

It is the duty of anyone working with children to look out for them and prevent them from harm. It is also your duty to provide a safe and secure environment for children and young people to flourish in, and you should allow them to participate and have their voices and opinions heard. Therefore, if you notice any issues or anything that is wrong, you should report it immediately to child protection agencies to help protect the child from further harm.

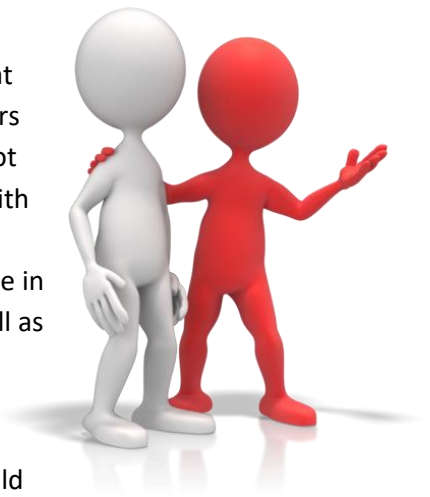
3.2 – Identify and seek supervision support for issues of ethical concern in practice with children and young people

By the end of this chapter, the learner should be able to:

- Ask for support from a supervisor if they have any issues or concerns
- Identify and explain what ethical concerns there could be when working in a childcare setting
- Explain what a supervisor's role is and what they should do to help.

Identify and seek support

It is important if you notice any issues of ethical concern in the workplace that you seek support from your supervisor before you take any action. Supervisors are there to help and support you, and to watch members of staff who are not doing their job properly. You should be able to communicate any concerns with them and identify when it is time to ask for support. If you are aware of something bad happening that affects the safety of children and young people in the workplace, this should be reported immediately to your supervisor as well as the relevant authorities.



Ethical concerns you should report when working in a childcare setting:

- A member of staff inappropriately handling or touching a child
- Someone talking inappropriately around children
- Dismissing the child's views and opinions
- Not looking after their needs properly
- Talking disrespectfully about the child's family
- Disrupting and interfering with their learning
- Punishing children inappropriately and being too critical
- Excluding or mistreating children with disabilities
- Putting children down and causing them to have low self-esteem and confidence.

Before reporting or accusing a member of staff of mistreating a child, make sure you have reason to believe they have done something wrong and enough evidence and information to prove this. You should still make your supervisor aware of any suspicions you have as they would be able to investigate it further before taking any action. For example, they may watch the member of staff around children or arrange a meeting with the staff member to discuss it.

A supervisor's role

If you have any concerns, it is a good idea to ask to speak to the supervisor privately and give them the reasons for your concern and explain what information or evidence you may have. Your supervisor should appreciate your ethics, honesty, and professionalism for dealing with the issue in the correct way, and not ignoring it or taking the matter into your own hands. They should investigate the issue further and also offer you any ongoing support or advice you need.

What a supervisor can help with:

- Providing help and advice when required
- Discussing any worries, issues or concerns you may have
- Offering additional training and support when required
- Providing regular feedback on your work
- Investigating any issues or concerns that have been reported
- Arranging meetings with staff to discuss any concerns
- Assisting with any disagreements or issues with co-workers



If you report something to your supervisor but you don't feel like anything is being resolved, you should report it to someone higher in the organisation such as your manager, or report it to a specialist and see if they can help you. Anything you report should be kept confidential and not shared with anyone else other than the relevant persons who can help.

3.3 – Employ ethical and nurturing practices and observe professional boundaries when working with children and young people

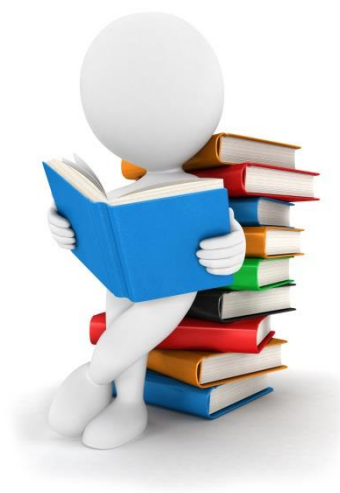
By the end of this chapter, the learner should be able to:

- Use ethical and nurturing practices when working with children and young people
- Explain what professional boundary violations are and give examples
- Make ethical decisions in the workplace.

Ethical and nurturing practices

Ethics are very important and should be at the heart of everyday practice when working in children’s services. It involves thinking about your actions and decisions and responding in a respectful way, taking into account the individuals needs and requirements. People working in a childcare setting should have the child’s best interest at heart at all times. You may experience ethical dilemmas in your work which will require careful thought and consideration in order to achieve the best outcome. The ethical nature of working with children and young people is recognised by organisations and workplaces adopting a professional code of ethics for staff to follow. A code of ethics should be used as a guidance document for professionals working with children to help them cope with any difficult situations or issues that may arise in childcare settings. The core values that underpin a code of ethics are usually:

- Respect
- Integrity
- Honesty



Modified from source: http://ncac.acecqa.gov.au/educator-resources/pcf-articles/Ethics_a_part%20of_everyday_practice_Mar09.pdf. Accessed on 20/10/2016.

Professional boundaries

Professional boundaries are essential for developing and maintaining safe and appropriate relationships with children and young people in care settings. A caregiver can have a positive impact on the child’s future and provide them with good experiences growing up. However, the professional boundary can be breached if the carer misuses their power and takes advantage of the child’s trust, which could affect the child’s safety and welfare. Therefore, when interacting with children, professionals should be careful of engaging in certain behaviours with them and consider the implications and consequences of their actions at all times. The needs of the child should always be at the forefront of your mind and should influence the decisions you make in your role.

Professional boundaries can sometimes be broken without you being aware and this can have a detrimental effect on the relationship, the child and can also result in disciplinary action. Professionals working with children should be provided with guidelines, such as the code of ethics, to inform and

guide them about managing professional boundaries. This will help them to understand the importance of boundaries, minimise the risk of any boundary violations occurring and encourage them to use their own judgement positively in situations.

Examples of professional boundary violations:

- Treating a child different to others and favouring them
- Being more of a friend or counsellor to the child than your actual role
- Meeting the child or young person outside of the workplace
- Using power or authority to harm them
- Offering money to a child or young person
- Buying them new clothing or gifts
- Talking to them inappropriately or about personal matters
- Using social media to interact with them outside of the workplace
- Asking them inappropriate and personal questions
- Offering them advice beyond your job role.



If you are considering helping a child or young person who is mistreated or disadvantaged, or offering them your advice because they have come to you wanting to talk, you should discuss this with your supervisor first. Be open and honest with your supervisor about your intentions to find out what their thoughts are and whether you would be violating any professional boundaries by doing this. It is important to do this before acting on anything as it could have serious consequences for yourself and the child or young person.

Modified from sources: http://www.trb.nt.gov.au/data/assets/pdf_file/0019/40915/Managing-Professional-Boundaries-Guidelines-for-Teachers-.pdf, <http://www.childwise.org.au/page/28/professional-boundaries>. Accessed on 20/10/2016.

Ethical decision-making model

The Australian Public Service Commission developed a decision-making model using the acronyms REFLECT. This was designed to help a professional working with children evaluate and deal with any conducts that are concerning them and help them to make an ethical decision.

- R and E stands for recognising a potential issue or problem and examining the situation
- F stands for finding relevant information, such as gathering facts and evidence using the Code of Conduct

- L stands for liaising and consulting with peers and supervisors to get help and advice with the situation
- E stands for evaluating the options, figuring out what the best thing to do is based on the information gathered and what the risks could be
- C stands for coming to a decision, considering whether you would need to get permission to do this and recording your actions
- T stands for taking time to reflect, considering whether you are happy with your decisions and whether you would do the same thing next time.

Source: http://www.trb.nt.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0019/40915/Managing-Professional-Boundaries-Guidelines-for-Teachers-.pdf. Accessed on 20/10/2016.

Maintaining professional boundaries

As long as you follow your organisations code of ethics and work within the parameters of your role, maintaining boundaries with children and young people should come naturally and you should be able to tell if something isn't right before you take action.

How you can manage professional boundaries:

- Follow work policies and procedures and legislation
- Be aware of your role and work within these parameters
- Be professional, open and honest at work
- Treat all children equally and with respect
- Report any issues or concerns you have about a child or young person
- Provide a safe and secure environment for children
- Understand when something needs to be kept confidential
- Build a trusting relationship with every child in your care
- Supporting and encouraging children's relationships with their parents

- Ask your supervisor for advice if you're unsure about whether to do something.



3.4 – Recognise and report indicators for potential ethical concerns when working with children and young people

By the end of this chapter, the learner should be able to:

- Explain what ethics are and why they are important
- Recognise and explain potential ethical concerns when working with children and young people
- Report any indicators of potential ethical concerns in the workplace.

Ethical concerns

It is important to be able to recognise potential ethical concerns in the workplace so you can report any indicators immediately. Ethics are moral principles that affect how people make decisions and live their lives on a daily basis. It is about doing what is right for people and society and can be described as moral philosophy. The term comes from the Greek word *ethos*, which means custom, habit, character and disposition. Ethics are usually concerned with other people's interests or the interests of society instead of our own, and they can affect the way we behave, encouraging us to do good instead of bad if we realise our actions would be unethical.

However, it is important to distinguish between ethical and legal issues and to identify whether a certain issue has both legal and ethical implications. For example, the legal responsibilities in children's services are the workers duty of care to children, which states that they must report any suspected child protection issues by law. Whereas an ethical issue could involve being honest with children and colleagues, which is something that would be expected of you at work, but it is not legally required. Ethical issues don't have any law behind them, but they can affect people around you and unethical behaviour can have serious consequences.

Examples of unethical conduct would be:

- Treating children in different ways and not equally
- Avoiding to help a child or young person because you don't like them
- Not giving certain children or families the help and advice they need
- Buying gifts for children or young people
- Asking them for personal information about themselves or their family
- Talking to them about personal issues
- Meeting the child or young person outside of the workplace



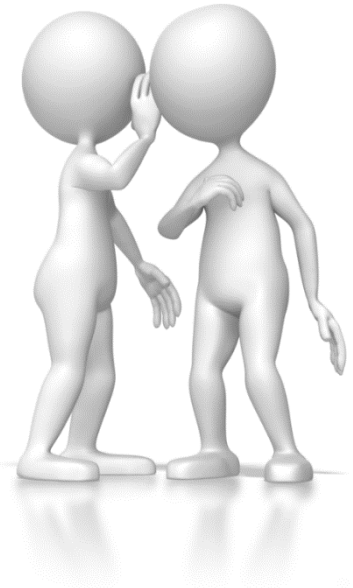
- Interfering with the child or their family outside of the workplace
- Building a personal relationship with them that goes beyond your role.

Modified from sources: http://www.bbc.co.uk/ethics/introduction/intro_1.shtml,
http://ncac.acecqa.gov.au/educator-resources/pcf-articles/Ethics_a_part%20of_everyday_practice_Mar09.pdf. Accessed on 20/10/2016.

Reporting ethical concerns

It is important that you are professional and follow workplace policies, procedures and code of conduct when carrying out your role. You should adhere to them at all times to ensure you are behaving ethically and in the way that the company expects you to. If you notice any ethical concerns in the workplace by other members of staff then you should speak to your supervisor so they can investigate it further. It is important to report anything unethical to help children and protect them from harm.

If anyone asks you for advice regarding an ethical dilemma they are dealing with, you should advise them to speak to their supervisor and refer to the code of conduct and use it as a guide to making their decision. You should avoid offering advice to people in the workplace as it could land you in trouble if it turns out to be incorrect advice, and it could also have serious consequences for everyone involved.



References

These suggested references are for further reading and do not necessarily represent the contents of this unit.

Websites

Asking questions:

<https://www.eduweb.vic.gov.au/edulibrary/public/stuman/wellbeing/discloseguide.pdf>

Child abuse: <https://www.healthdirect.gov.au/child-abuse>

Child abuse: <http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/for-individuals/children,-families-and-young-people/child-protection/about-child-abuse/what-is-child-abuse>

Child protection procedures: <http://www.aihw.gov.au/child-protection/>

Child-focused work practices: https://www.det.nsw.edu.au/proflearn/cpat/documents/cpat_sec3.pdf

Children's rights: <https://www.humanrights.gov.au/our-work/childrens-rights/about-childrens-rights>

Children's rights: <http://www.unicef.org.uk/UNICEFs-Work/UN-Convention/>

Ethical concerns: http://www.bbc.co.uk/ethics/introduction/intro_1.shtml,
[http://ncac.acecqa.gov.au/educator-resources/pcf-articles/Ethics a part%20 of everyday practice Mar09.pdf](http://ncac.acecqa.gov.au/educator-resources/pcf-articles/Ethics_a_part%20of_everyday_practice_Mar09.pdf)

Ethical decision-making model:

http://www.trb.nt.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0019/40915/Managing-Professional-Boundaries-Guidelines-for-Teachers-.pdf

Early years settings:

<http://www.centreforglobaleducation.org/includes/documents/ChildrensRightsintheEarlyYearsSetting.pdf>

Ethical and nurturing practices: [http://ncac.acecqa.gov.au/educator-resources/pcf-articles/Ethics a part%20 of everyday practice Mar09.pdf](http://ncac.acecqa.gov.au/educator-resources/pcf-articles/Ethics_a_part%20of_everyday_practice_Mar09.pdf)

Good communication: <http://www.unicef.org/cwc/>

Mandatory reporting: <https://aifs.gov.au/cfca/publications/mandatory-reporting-child-abuse-and-neglect>

Neglect: <https://www.communities.qld.gov.au/childsafety/protecting-children/what-is-child-abuse/signs-of-child-abuse-and-neglect>

Notifications: <http://www.aihw.gov.au/child-protection/>

National Quality Framework: <https://www.education.gov.au/legislation-ratings-and-standards-information-national-quality-framework-nqf>

Policies and procedures: <http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/for-service-providers/children,-youth-and-families/child-protection/child-protection-practice-manual-online>

Professional boundaries: http://www.trb.nt.gov.au/data/assets/pdf_file/0019/40915/Managing-Professional-Boundaries-Guidelines-for-Teachers-.pdf

Professional boundaries: <http://www.childwise.org.au/page/28/professional-boundaries>

Risk-of-harm indicators: : <http://www.secasa.com.au/pages/defining-and-identifying-child-abuse/indicators-of-harm/>

State legislation: <http://www.acecqa.gov.au/national-quality-framework/national-law-and-regulations/national-law>

United Nations Convention: <http://www.unicef.org.uk/UNICEFs-Work/UN-Convention/>

All references accessed on and correct as of 21/10/2016, unless other otherwise stated.

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