

Child Protection Policy

Reference: Education (Early Childhood Services) Regulations 2008, regulation 46, 56, 57
Licensing Criteria for Early Childhood Education and Care Centres 2008, HS31
Child, Youth and Family, 2001, *Let's stop child abuse together, an interagency guide to breaking the cycle.*
Ministry of Education, 1993, *Prevent Child Abuse: Guidelines for Early Childhood Education Services.*
Child Youth and Family have liaison officers who offer advice and support to early childhood services.
Vulnerable Children Act 2014

Rationale: The safety and wellbeing of the children that attend Little Explorers is vital. We believe that it is our responsibility to protect children's emotional, physical and mental wellbeing, and to help make our wider community a safe place for our children to be in.

Objectives:

- To ensure that Little Explorers provides a safe environment and is committed to the prevention of abuse to all children in our care.
- To ensure that all staff and parents are aware of the centre's procedures for preventing and reporting suspected abuse.
- To ensure that all children that attend Little Explorers are protected and Little Explorers is in accordance with the above regulation outlines.
- To ensure that the protection and welfare of all children in our care is our prime consideration.
- To ensure that our appointment procedures protect children by meeting the Vulnerable Children's Act 2014

Staff Recruitment:

New employees, volunteers and any other person in regular unsupervised contact with the children will undergo a thorough checking of their credentials, as per the guidelines in the Vulnerable Children's Act 2014 summarised below. For full procedures see the process in the EEO/Staff Appointment Policy.

1. Identity Check (as per Vulnerable Children Act procedures).
 2. Interview with applicant.
 3. Work history covering the applicant's preceding five years of employment.
 4. Verbal contact with at least one referee that is not related to or part of the applicant's extended family.
 5. Seeking information from any relevant professional organisations,
 6. A New Zealand Police vet (unless at least three-yearly New Zealand Police vetting is already a condition of the applicant's holding professional registration or a practicing certificate, and the specified organisation has confirmed that that registration or certificate is current).
- Information gained from the above credentials checks will be used to assess the risk the potential applicant would pose to the safety of children if employed.

- Applicants are carefully considered ensuring they have the appropriate skills and attributes which will not compromise the safety and well being of the children. This applies to both fulltime and part-time staff.

Prevention:

- All staff will be made aware of the centre's child protection policy as part of their induction. Provision for staff to attend on-going training will be made available in the form of courses, workshops and literature from appropriate agencies. Staff at Little Explorers will always be informed of other agencies, individuals and organisations in the community. An up to date resource file will be kept at the centre for all staff and other adults to read and familiarise themselves with. Staff are aware that abuse could occur to any child by any person therefore they are encouraged to attend courses to develop their awareness.
- Volunteers and casual staff will be supervised by permanent staff.
- Little Explorers will exclude any person employed or engaged in the service for coming into contact with children if they have reasonable grounds to believe that the person:
 - Has physically ill-treated or abused a child or committed a crime against children.
 - In guiding or controlling a child, has subjected the child to solitary confinement, immobilisation, or deprivation of food, drink, warmth, shelter, or protection.
 - Is in a state of physical or mental health that presents any risk of danger to children.
- To enhance the children's safety, staff will monitor each other while interacting with the children. There is a clear open door policy to ensure staff are always visible where personal caretaking of children is required, and the teaching and learning environment is designed openly to support this. Staff will inform each other when it is necessary for them to assist a child in toileting or changing clothes. Situations where staff and other adults may be alone are kept to a minimum. All new staff will be shown the centre's supervision plan that considers the preferred positions for supervising children, although staff should always use their initiative to move if the circumstances change, i.e. child or other staff movements.
- Children are not allowed to leave the centre without written parental approval except in an emergency. All staff members will be made aware of any custodial issues as they occur. Court documents will be attached to the child's enrolment form, if applicable. Photo identification will be obtained if a person has not been physically introduced by a parent, yet is approved on the enrolment form (non-custodial policy will be followed).
- During outings staff will follow the centre excursion policy and ensure that when breaking into groups that a permanent staff member is always present and supervising children.
- Little Explorers encourages families to participate in social functions and activities run by Little Explorers such as excursion trips and holiday events. Staff are encouraged to keep their personal and professional lives separate when dealing with families that attend the

centre. Personal interactions with children and families outside the work environment, such as social media connections or babysitting is discouraged.

- Staff regularly review our child protection policy and evaluate our performance in meeting the expectations and standards outline within it.
- A copy of the centre’s child protection policy is displayed on the wall for parents to be aware of the policy and procedures.
- If parents have any concerns they are able to read the complaints policy and follow the steps. This policy is displayed in the main entrance of the centre.
- We believe educating children and parents plays a vital role in preventing and protecting children from abuse. Parents will be encouraged to make use of all information available to them by the centre in the form of literature they can borrow from the parent library, notices on the parent notice board and newsletters informing them of educational programmes organised by any group or individual in the community.

Acceptable Touching and Handling of Children:

Clear guidelines and rules about acceptable touching of children have been devised, which staff and other adults will discuss on a regular basis. This is to ensure all staff and parents are aware of appropriate and inappropriate means of touching and handling of children.

Appropriate Touching	Inappropriate Touching
Gentle, soft cuddles when a child is hurt or upset.	Pulling of children’s body parts (e.g. ears, arms, legs) as a means of discipline is under no circumstances acceptable.
Touching of children as a means of guidance or attending to a child’s personal care. e.g.. Nappy changing.	Hitting or smacking of children is under no circumstances acceptable.
Every child will be picked up in a safe manner.	Shouting, swearing or any verbal abuse will never be used at the centre
Touching during games or activities in a safe manner.	

- All visitors to the centre must first report to the office and sign in. Visitors at no time will be left unattended with children. No visitors or relieving staff are to complete care procedures for children, this includes nappy changing or putting children to bed when they would be in an isolated situation.
- Little Explorers support the roles of the Police and the New Zealand Children and Youth and Family Services. Staff will maintain a good rapport with the appropriate authorities having specialist knowledge and expertise in protecting children from abuse. Staff will not assume responsibility beyond their level of expertise.

- Management are familiar with laws and regulations which protect children from child abuse.

Identification of possible abuse or neglect:

- As stated above, all staff will be informed of the Child Protection Policy and procedures and any training opportunities that arise.
- Maintaining and increasing staff awareness of how to prevent, recognise and respond to all forms of child abuse is a priority:
 - Physical**
 - Verbal**
 - Neglect**
 - Sexual**
 - Emotional**
- There will be monthly discussions at staff meetings, talking about recognising signs of abuse, actions to take and any current children we may be concerned about. This is to ensure that an awareness of abuse is always a priority. We will refer to the latest resources provided for information.

Procedures for responding to suspected child abuse:

- Ensure that the child's safety and well being is paramount
- Refer the matter to the management team, ensuring that no staff member needs to act alone.
- Maintain confidentiality where appropriate.
- Direct reporting can occur at anytime by anyone.

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- Begin documenting all conversations with the child (recording accurately in the child's own words), observations and communication which cause concern. Details of any marks or bruising will be recorded on a body profile sheet. (templates stored in the Child Protection file) in the office cupboard. "Listen carefully, write things down word for word, don't make promises you cannot keep, reassure the child".
- Consultation with the appropriate agencies will be made if staff suspect that child abuse has occurred and a child is unsafe.
- All documentation gathered in this process will be strictly confidential and will be filed in the office locked cupboard. Refer to advice in the Child Protection File.

- If the staff believe the suspected abuse may have been perpetrated by a family member, or someone close to the family they will not initially inform the family of their decision to report or consult, ensuring they will be informed by the appropriate person at the appropriate time.
- Where suspected abuse has been perpetrated by a staff member or others assisting at the centre, **whoever suspects the abuse is obliged to report it** to the management team, another staff member, Ministry of Education or statutory authorities. Staff members suspected of child abuse will be suspended while the matter is investigated being fully informed of their rights. If the person suspected of committing child abuse is a person assisting at the centre, staff will ensure the person has no further contact with the centre while the investigation takes place.
- A staff member under suspicion is directed to appropriate legal/professional advice and support.
- Little Explorers will ensure that all those involved in an investigation where child abuse is suspected are supported.

Approved by: Name: Position: Date:	Tracey Gaskell, Ki Mansell Manager, Supervisor 08/12/16
Consultation:	Staff, Management, Parent Feedback.
Next Review Date:	April 2017
Copies Located:	Hall Display, Operations Manual, Child Protection Folder, Website