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## CHILD SAFETY AND WELLBEING REPORTING POLICY AND PROCEDURE

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**Responsible Officer:** Jacinda Armstrong,  
CEO

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### Introduction

Playgroup Tasmania believes that all children have the right to live safely – emotionally, mentally and physically. Playgroup Tasmania is committed to promoting and protecting the safety and wellbeing of all children at all times and in all circumstances in interactions with Playgroup Tasmania. Everyone has a role to play in keeping children safe from harm and creating child safe and child friendly environments. Playgroup Tasmania endorses the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and is committed to ensuring the wellbeing and safety of children across Tasmania participating in Playgroup Tasmania activities.

Playgroup Tasmania takes its duty of care seriously and aims at all times to

- provide the safest possible playgroup activities and environment for children
- identify and respond to any risks that may lead to harm as they arise
- strive for best practice in relation to our work with children and family
- support and provide sensitive assistance to children attending Playgroup Tasmania activities who disclose child abuse or are otherwise linked to child abuse
- support and educate the Playgroup Tasmania community with regard to child wellbeing and safety

### Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to inform the Playgroup Tasmania community (employees, volunteers, contractors, partner organisations and program participants of Playgroup Tasmania)

- of our responsibilities to ensure the safety and wellbeing of children and young people who use our activities and programs
- with guidance on working to provide child safe, child friendly and child protective services and environments

## Child Safety and Wellbeing Reporting Policy and Procedure

- of how to respond to concerns and allegations of child abuse
- of our procedures for recruitment, support, supervision and training to support child safety and wellbeing within the organisation.

### Who does this Policy apply to?

This policy applies to the following members of the Playgroup Tasmania community.

Employees and Volunteers (including leadership and trainees)	Board Members	Playgroup Leaders	Contractors/ Consultants (including employees of contractors)	Playgroup Parents and Care Givers	Playgroup Children
✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

This policy applies to all activities run by Playgroup Tasmania Inc. This includes all activities in the organisation which involve, result in or relate to contact with children.

This policy takes into account the diversity of all children, including but not limited to, the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, children with disability and children who are vulnerable ensuring sensitivity to our whole community.

The policy aims to create an open and aware environment where concerns for the safety and wellbeing of a child can be raised and managed in a fair and just manner, that protects the rights of all. The policy provides guidance on how to work respectfully with children and how to respond to concerns and allegations of child abuse. Information is included about the recruitment and supervision of employees, volunteers and contractors.

This policy covers all forms of ‘child abuse’ as defined in the Tasmanian Children, Young People and Their Families Act 1997, *abuse or neglect* means–

- (a) sexual abuse; or
- (b) physical or emotional injury or other abuse, or neglect, to the extent that–
  - (i) the injured, abused or neglected person has suffered, or is likely to suffer, physical or psychological harm detrimental to the person's wellbeing; or
  - (ii) the injured, abused or neglected person's physical or psychological development is in jeopardy.

The Chief Executive Officer (CEO) is responsible for monitoring organisational wide compliance with this procedure.

## Child Safety and Wellbeing Reporting Policy and Procedure

All employees, volunteers and contractors must adhere to the following:-

- Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy
- Child Safety and Wellbeing Code of Conduct
- Child Safety and Wellbeing Reporting Policy and Procedures
- National Child Safe Organisations Principles
- Mandatory Reporting requirements

### Policy

Playgroup Tasmania believes that any form of child abuse and exploitation is unacceptable and has zero tolerance of child abuse. All children have a right to be safe at all times and we, as an organisation, have an obligation to provide child safe, child friendly and child protective services and environments.

Playgroup Tasmania recognises our duty of care to take all reasonable steps to ensure that children are safe from harm and will take proactive steps to create child safe and friendly programs and environments. All decisions regarding the safety, welfare and protection of children are made on the basis of the best interests of the child. We want all children to gain the maximum benefit possible from the services we provide and that the positive impacts from any course of action outweigh any negative impacts.

Playgroup Tasmania will adhere to the Tasmanian Children, Young People and Their Families Act 1997. If it is considered that a child is at risk of harm, or has been harmed, within his/her family or in a Playgroup Tasmania activity, the steps outlined in this policy will be followed. Most child abuse occurs within families and communities; however, children can also be at risk of abuse in organisations.

Whilst Playgroup Tasmania has thorough employment screening practices of employees, volunteers and contractors, child safety is an ongoing process. Any concerns in relation to non-accidental harm or the risk of non-accidental harm must be immediately reported to and acted on by our organisation.

Adherence to this policy is a mandatory requirement for all employees, volunteers and contractors.

**Note: This policy does not exclude an individual's Mandatory Reporting responsibilities (see further information on page 6 of this policy and procedure).**

## Child Safety and Wellbeing Reporting Policy and Procedure

### Definitions

**Child** Playgroup Tasmania uses the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) definition of a child, which is any person under the age of 18, regardless of whether a nation's laws recognise adulthood earlier. For the purposes of this Policy, the definition also includes an unborn child.

**Young person:** Usually defined as a person between the ages of 12-25 years. Playgroup Tasmania may have Young People participating in activities who are also parents.

#### **Child protection**

The term used to describe the responsibilities and activities undertaken to prevent or stop children being abused, neglected, exploited or maltreated. Often used to refer to a statutory authority responsible for investigating and responding to reports of child abuse in the community. In Tasmania this is the Strong Families Safe Kids Advice and Referral Line.

**Child Abuse** The deliberate act of ill-treatment that can harm or is likely to cause harm to a child's safety, wellbeing, dignity and development. Abuse includes all forms of physical, sexual, psychological or emotional ill treatment.

**Physical Abuse:** involves the use of violent physical force so as to cause actual or likely physical injury or suffering (eg hitting, shaking, burning, female genital mutilation, torture).

**Emotional or Psychological Abuse:** includes humiliating and degrading treatment, or witnessing of humiliating and degrading treatment behaviours, such as bad name-calling, constant criticism, belittling, persistent shaming, solitary confinement and isolation.

**Sexual Abuse:** includes all forms of sexual violence or witnessing of any form of sexual violence, including incest, early and forced marriage, rape, involvement in pornography and sexual slavery. Child sexual abuse may also include indecent touching or exposure, using sexually explicit language towards a child and showing children pornographic material.

**Neglect:** Deliberately, or through carelessness or negligence, failing to provide for, or secure for a child, their rights to physical safety and development.

**Exploitation:** refers to the use of children for someone else's advantage, gratification or profit often resulting in unjust, cruel and harmful treatment of the child. These activities are to the detriment of the child's physical or mental health, education, moral or social-emotional development.

## Child Safety and Wellbeing Reporting Policy and Procedure

**Violence:** “The intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against a child, by an individual or group, that either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in actual or potential harm to the child’s health, survival, development or dignity” (WHO in the World Report on Violence and Health 2002). Violence can be committed by individuals or by the State as well as groups and organisations through their members and policies. It results not only in fear of/or actual injury but also in fundamental interference with personal freedom.

**Harm:** The result of the exploitation, violence, abuse and neglect of children and can take many forms, including impacts of children’s physical, emotional and behavioural development, their general health, their family and social relationships, their self esteem, their educational attainment and aspirations.

**Grooming:** Describes the ‘preparation’ phase of child sexual assault and exploitation, undertaken by the perpetrator to gain the trust of the child or young person, and to establish secrecy and silence. It is not always only the child or young person who is groomed. Parents and carers or other significant adults (including organisations) may also be groomed by someone intending to harm a child.

**Code of Conduct** A policy which specifies behaviours expected of all employees, volunteers, board members and contractors of the organisation.

**Contractor** A person or organisation that undertakes a contract to provide materials, tasks or labour to do a service or job.

**Duty of care** A requirement that a person/organisation act towards others with the attention, caution and alertness that a reasonable person in the circumstances would. It is the duty of Playgroup Tasmania to protect children from all reasonably foreseeable risk of injury or harm when involved with our organisation.

**Employees, Staff and Volunteers of Playgroup Tasmania** Employed persons, consultants, Board members, volunteers and work experience students.

**Parent Participant** A family member or caregiver who participates in playgroup with a child. Parent participants may take on leadership or support roles within a playgroup but do not fall under the Playgroup Tasmania definition of Volunteer (see below).

**Playgroup Tasmania community member** Playgroup Tasmania employees, volunteers, parents / primary care givers and contractors.

## Child Safety and Wellbeing Reporting Policy and Procedure

**Volunteers** Playgroup Tasmania uses the Volunteering Australia definition for volunteering 'time willingly given for the common good and without financial gain'. Playgroup Tasmania has community members who volunteer to support Playgroup Tasmania activities such as assisting in the running of programs and Board membership. Volunteers perform their roles by choice. Playgroup volunteer is a person who is providing support to a playgroup but does not have responsibility for a child who is participating in an activity.

**Working with Vulnerable People Registration (WWVP)** The Working with Vulnerable People Registration has become a crucial legal check in Tasmania to help reduce crime, sexual offences, improper behaviours and harm to the vulnerable members of our society. A WWVP registration is required for any employee, volunteer or contractor that has regular contact with children, either as part of their involvement in the organisation or due to the context of the work that brings the person into regular contact with children.

### Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy Procedures

#### 1. Child Safe Recruitment and Screening

Recruitment and screening of staff and volunteers will reflect Playgroup Tasmania's commitment to protect children. Checks and procedures are in place to screen out anyone who may be unsuitable to be in contact with children and young people and to attract the safest people who share Playgroup Tasmania's values and commitment to protect children.

All employment contracts must contain provisions for dismissal, suspension or transfer to other duties for any personnel who breach the Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy and Code of Conduct.

Playgroup Tasmania has a robust recruitment and screening process for all employees, volunteers and Board members

These include:

- National Police check prior to engagement
- Working with Vulnerable People Check
- Child protection related interview question
- Two verbal referee checks - including question relating to the applicant's general conduct. One reference must be from the person's current or most recent employer
- Signing of the Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy, Code of Conduct and Reporting Policy and Procedures prior to commencing with Playgroup Tasmania

## Child Safety and Wellbeing Reporting Policy and Procedure

Additional procedures for those working with children or having access to child sensitive data

- Targeted/behavioural based interview questions used to determine attitudes, motivations, and values in regards to children and young people and working with them.
- Referee check to include questions regarding any concerns about candidate's conduct when working or interacting with children and young people

These procedures must be evidenced by the following documentation on the personnel file

- National Police check
- Working with Vulnerable People Check registration as employee or volunteer
- Verbal referee checks
- Interview record incorporating behavioural-based interview questions that are specific to positions that involve working with children
- Signed copies of the Child Safety and Wellbeing Statement (Appendix 1).

### 2. Support, Supervision and Training

To create and support best practice working environments where risks to children and young people are minimised, all employees are required to:

- Participate in induction, training and education processes on an as required basis.
- Receive regular mentoring and supervision from their relevant supervisor.
- Participate in an annual formal performance review and development plan
- Undertake Child Safety training (including Mandatory Reporting where required).

All employees and Board Members of Playgroup Tasmania should participate in a refresher Child Safety and Wellbeing Policies training session every two years.

All other volunteers must be provided with an induction on the Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy, Code of Conduct and Child Safety Reporting Policy and Procedures.

A Playgroup Tasmania representative will conduct checking of Working with Vulnerable People registration status for all staff and volunteers annually.

Playgroup Tasmania is committed to the safety and wellbeing of children. We recognise that child safety and protection is a complex issue. Employees and volunteers will be provided with opportunities to undertake appropriate professional development to assist them in the identification of possible child abuse and to assist in developing skills in responding to children who may have been abused. Playgroup Tasmania will inform staff and volunteers of training and education activities related to child development, child safety and wellbeing and protection.

## Child Safety and Wellbeing Reporting Policy and Procedure

All employees and volunteers are provided with the Playgroup Tasmania Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy, the Child Safety and Wellbeing Code of Conduct and the Child Safety and Wellbeing Reporting Policy and Procedures as part of their recruitment and induction and they are expected to follow these policies.

If employees and volunteers do not follow the Playgroup Tasmania policies and procedures and place children at risk, it may be considered to be a case of serious misconduct and may result in summary dismissal and the involvement of Tasmania Police.

### 3. Reporting Process

Playgroup Tasmania values an open culture; one that supports bringing forward observations and concerns. This is especially so with matters that impact the safety and wellbeing of children.

All reports and concerns about child abuse will be taken seriously and be acted on immediately. It is compulsory for all Playgroup Tasmania community members to report concerns and allegations of child abuse and to complete the Playgroup Tasmania Child Safety and Wellbeing Incident Report form (appendix 2). These concerns may relate to a child or an employee or volunteer involved in the organisation or a concern about a child within his/her family. Any concerns must be reported immediately to the relevant Playgroup Tasmania primary contact person who will report to Playgroup Tasmania CEO.

The Children Young People and their Families Act emphasises that everyone in the community has a responsibility for ensuring that children are safe and protected.

#### Mandatory Reporting Responsibilities:

In addition, the Children Young People and their Families Act lists the following people (prescribed persons) who are legally required to report their suspicions that a child is being abused ([s14](#))

- medical practitioners;
- nurses and midwives;
- dentists and other dental professionals;
- police officers;
- psychologists;
- police officers;
- probation officers;
- school principals and teachers in any educational institution (including a kindergarten);
- persons who manage child care services or provide child care for a fee or reward;
- in general people employed, or who are volunteers in government agencies or organisations funded by the Crown that provide health, welfare, education, or care wholly or partly for children.



## Child Safety and Wellbeing Reporting Policy and Procedure

If a prescribed person believes or suspects with good reason that a child is being or is likely to be abused or neglected, or is in real danger from the person whom they are living with, the person must contact the Secretary of Department of Health or the Strong Families Safe Kids Advice and Referral Line with this information as soon as practicable. This also applies to unborn children ([s14\(2\), CYPFA](#)). Contact details for services and reporting are available on the [Strong families Safe Kids website](#)

### 4. Who should report?

Any Playgroup Tasmania community member.

### 5. What should be reported?

- Disclosure or allegation made by a child and/or Playgroup Tasmania community member.
- Observations of concerning behaviour exhibited by a child and/or Playgroup Tasmania community member or any other adult in contact with children.
- Injuries or behaviours in children that may be indicators of non-accidental injuries or harm.
- Inappropriate use of Playgroup Tasmania photographic and communications equipment that may be indicative of child exploitation.

### 6. Who to report to?

**If there are immediate concerns about the safety or wellbeing of a child you are to contact the Strong Families Safe Kids Advice and Referral Line on 1800 000 123. You can choose to remain anonymous.**

Notwithstanding the above, all concerns are to be reported within 24 hours to your Playgroup Tasmania primary contact person who will promptly notify the CEO.

The CEO will determine actions to be implemented and the process for reporting incidents to the Board. A Child Safety and Wellbeing Incident Report Form (appendix 2) will be completed as soon as practical.

Physical and sexual assault are criminal offences. Where it is believed that a physical or sexual assault offence may have been committed, the matter will be reported to Tasmania Police by the person reporting the allegation or Playgroup Tasmania.

**Note: This policy does not exclude an individual's Mandatory Reporting responsibilities (see above).**

## Child Safety and Wellbeing Reporting Policy and Procedure

### 7. Complaints Resolution Procedure

All Playgroup Tasmania community members are supported to come forward if they have any concern or suspicion about the behaviour of a co-worker, volunteer, primary carer or family member. These concerns are to be raised with a Playgroup Tasmania employee who will report to the CEO, or if the concern relates to the behaviour of the CEO, with the Chairperson of the Board, prior to taking any action.

These concerns will be investigated with sensitivity and discretion: the fear of being incorrect or embarrassed should not prevent concerns being raised.

The CEO or Chairperson of the Board, will:

- Determine the seriousness of the allegation/concern
- Follow the Child Safety and Wellbeing Reporting Policy and Procedures
- Complete a Playgroup Tasmania Child Safety and Wellbeing Incident Reporting Form
- Meet with the respondent/alleged perpetrator to discuss the incident and any potential breaches of this policy or the Child Safety and Wellbeing Code of Conduct
- Immediately remove an employee/volunteer from the workplace and suspend with pay (if applicable) whilst an investigation takes place for instances where there is an indication that abuse may have occurred
- Take action if the issue is considered to be serious misconduct as per the employee disciplinary processes in the respective employment award
- Report the incident to Tasmania Police if it is of a criminal nature
- Debrief the volunteers and employees concerned to provide support and ensure duty of care and as part of evaluating Playgroup Tasmania processes
- Review the policies and procedures and update where required
- Playgroup Tasmania CEO will meet with the family involved to:
- Provide information and support
- Support the family to access appropriate counselling and ongoing support through community sector organisations
- Provide debriefing and/or counselling as appropriate to any other families, employees or volunteers associated with the incident for which Playgroup Tasmania will meet the cost.

### 8. Breach of Policy

Individuals failing to follow the policy and found to be in breach, may be subject to an employee disciplinary process according to their employment award. Depending on the severity of the case, the consequences for breach of this policy may involve termination of employment/engagement. Any matters involving criminal conduct will be reported to the Police.

## Child Safety and Wellbeing Reporting Policy and Procedure

If a complaint is found to be of a frivolous or vexatious nature, disciplinary action may be taken against the complainant.

### Relevant Legislation and Standards

“Children, Young Persons and Their Families Act 1997” (updated 22 April 2021) [View - Tasmanian Legislation Online](#)  
[https://www.communities.tas.gov.au/children/child\\_protection\\_services](https://www.communities.tas.gov.au/children/child_protection_services)

Tasmanian Government: Reporting Concerns  
[https://www.communities.tas.gov.au/children/child\\_protection\\_services/what\\_can\\_i\\_expect\\_when](https://www.communities.tas.gov.au/children/child_protection_services/what_can_i_expect_when)

Register to Work with Vulnerable People  
<https://www.cbos.tas.gov.au/topics/licensing-and-registration/work-with-vulnerable-people>

Working With Vulnerable People Employer obligations  
<https://www.cbos.tas.gov.au/topics/licensing-and-registration/work-with-vulnerable-people/employer-obligations>

Child Safe Organisations Act 2020 (Tas) *Draft Bill*

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child ([www.unicef.org/crc](http://www.unicef.org/crc))  
[Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities \(CRPD\)](#)

National Child Safe Organisations Principles

Child Safety for Department of Social Services funded organisations  
<https://www.dss.gov.au/child-safety-for-dss-funded-organisations>

Anglicare Community Partner Contract Compliance Checklist

### Responsibilities

The Chief Executive Officer is responsible for

- Monitoring organisation wide compliance with this procedure.
- Ensuring all employees and volunteers receive bi-annual retraining in Child Safety and Wellbeing practices as well as Mandatory Reporting
- Conducting annual staff performance review and development plans to ensure staff suitability for ongoing child centred work

## Child Safety and Wellbeing Reporting Policy and Procedure

- Ensuring staff are aware of and have access to all policies, procedures and Codes of Conduct relating to Child Safety and Wellbeing.

The Board is responsible for

- Development of strategies to embed a culture of child safety and wellbeing across the organisation
- Monitoring the implementation by the Chief Executive Officer of strategies to ensure the Playgroup Tasmania community are informed about these practices
- Annual review of the effectiveness of the policies, strategies and/or that these strategies are reviewed following any instances of child abuse.

All employees, contractors and volunteers must adhere to the following

- Playgroup Tasmania Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy
- Playgroup Tasmania Child Safety and Wellbeing Code of Conduct
- Playgroup Tasmania Child Safety Reporting Policy and Procedures
- National Child Safe Principles
- Mandatory Reporting requirements.

### Related Documents

Playgroup Tasmania Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy

Playgroup Tasmania Child Safety and Wellbeing Code of Conduct

Playgroup Tasmania Child Safety Reporting Policy and Procedures

Playgroup Tasmania Child Safety and Wellbeing Signed Statement

Playgroup Tasmania Child Safety and Wellbeing Incident Reporting Form

# Child Safety and Wellbeing Reporting Policy and Procedure

## Appendix 1

### Child Safety and Wellbeing Statement

\*to be signed by all Playgroup Tasmania staff, volunteers and contractors

I, \_\_\_\_\_ acknowledge that I have read and understand  
(insert name)

Playgroup Tasmania's:

1. Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy 2022;
2. Child Safety and Wellbeing Code of Conduct; and
3. Child Safety and Wellbeing Reporting Policy and Procedures

#### I agree to comply with the Policies, Code of Conduct and Reporting Process.

I understand that a breach of the Policies, Code or Reporting Process may provide grounds for my employment/engagement with Playgroup Tasmania to be terminated. I also understand that a breach of the Policies or Code could result in criminal prosecution.

I understand that it is my responsibility, as a person employed/engaged by Playgroup Tasmania, to use common sense and avoid actions that are abusive or exploitative of children and young people, or could be construed as such.

I authorise Playgroup Tasmania to undertake any necessary inquiries, including criminal record checks and reference checks, as part of my appointment or recruitment process.

I confirm my willingness to participate in Playgroup Tasmania training sessions on child safety, wellbeing and protection.

<b>Name</b>	
<b>Position</b>	
<b>Signed</b>	
<b>Witness Name</b>	
<b>Witness Signature</b>	
<b>Date</b>	

# Child Safety and Wellbeing Reporting Policy and Procedure

## Appendix 2

### Child Safety and Wellbeing Incident Report Form

#### Step 1 – When did the incident or disclosure happen?

Person reporting the incident or disclosure	
Program Group	
Location	
Actual date of incident or disclosure	
Time of Report	
Playgroup Tasmania staff reported to	

#### Step 2 - Details of the incident or disclosure (please attach any further information)

*Please complete the below with as much information as possible*

#### Names and dates of birth of children involved in the incident/disclosure

Name:  DOB:

Name:  DOB:

Name:  DOB:

#### Names and contact details of relevant parent/s, caregivers or persons involved

Name:  Relationship to Child :

Email:  Phone:

Name:  Relationship to Child :

Email:  Phone:

Playgroup Tasmania Family Membership Number:

## Child Safety and Wellbeing Reporting Policy and Procedure

Does the parent or caregiver know the report is being made?

Name:  Yes / No (please circle)

Name:  Yes / No (please circle)

Details of incident/disclosure:

**Step 3 A - Type of report**

Mandatory Report (as per legislation)     Child Safety Concern

**Step 3B - Type of Abuse**

Child Physical Abuse     Child Sexual Abuse

Child Emotional Abuse     Child Neglect

**Step 4 A - Who incident reported to (please tick)**

Tasmania Police     CEO

Child Safety Services - Advice and Referral Line 1800 000 123

## Child Safety and Wellbeing Reporting Policy and Procedure

**Step 4 B – Outcome of reporting: What did they say? What was their response?**  
Please include contact details including Badge Number for Police.

**Step 5 – Corrective Action (immediate action taken to rectify)**



## Child Safety and Wellbeing Reporting Policy and Procedure

### Step 6 – Preventative Action (action taken to ensure non-recurrence)

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### Step 7 – Person reporting the incident (employee / volunteer to complete this section)

Date form completed	
Name of person reporting the incident or disclosure	
Program	
Location	
Signature	
Witness (if applicable)	

### Step 8 – CEO Acknowledgement

Offer to access EAP    Name:     Date

CEO Name	
Signature	
Date	

## Child Safety and Wellbeing Reporting Policy and Procedure

### Step 9 – Office Use only

#### Important note regarding required record keeping:

This report form must be accompanied by all relevant information including (but not limited to):

- attendance sheets,
- accident report forms,
- details of group members,
- details of staff and volunteers present,
- details of any visitors,
- details of any unusual activities.

This report form and associated records must be retained for a **minimum of 21 years** from the date of the last incident.

Date Received  Incident Number

Mandatory Report Yes  No

Date Reported to Board  Board Chair

#### Mandatory Reportable to Tasmania Police:-

- a. Alleged, disclosed or suspected Sexual abuse of a child under the age of 16
- b. Alleged, disclosed or suspected Physical abuse of a child under the age of 16