
CHILD SAFETY AND WELLBEING POLICY

Policy Number: CSW-PI-001

Version Date: 06/06/2022

Approved by board on: 06/06/2022

Scheduled review date: 01/06/2024

Responsible Officer: Jacinda Armstrong, CEO

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 (Appendix 1) and is committed to ensuring the wellbeing and safety of children across Tasmania.

The policy will inform the Board, staff, volunteers and community members of their obligations to act ethically towards children and outline their roles and responsibilities in ensuring the safety and wellbeing of children.

The policy will give guidance on the processes and procedures that aim to ensure children's safety and wellbeing across all areas of Playgroup Tasmania's work.

Playgroup Tasmania is committed to promoting and protecting the best interests of children involved in its programs and has adopted the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations (see Appendix 2) throughout all its operations.

The Playgroup Tasmania Child Safety and Wellbeing policy is part of the demonstration of our organisation's commitment to the safety and wellbeing of children.

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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:

- approach to providing services, creating a child safe and child friendly environment for all children and young people.
- commitment to a child safe culture across our organisation.
- responsibilities to ensure the safety and wellbeing of children and young people who use our activities and programs.

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.

Policy

This policy replaces and overrides all previous child safety, protection and wellbeing policies of Playgroup Tasmania.

Playgroup Tasmania endorses the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (Appendix 1) and is committed to ensuring the wellbeing and safety of children across Tasmania. All children regardless of their gender, race, religious beliefs, age, ability, sexual orientation, family or social background have equal rights of protection from abuse.

Playgroup Tasmania will, where possible and taking into consideration that playgroup children are under 5 years of age, seek ideas and opinions of children when developing policies, ensuring their voice is central in all that we do.

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Playgroup Tasmania is committed to promoting and protecting the best interests of children involved in its programs and has adopted the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations (Appendix 2) throughout all its operations.

Playgroup Tasmania has zero tolerance for child abuse. All persons involved in the operations of Playgroup Tasmania are responsible for the care and protection of the children in attendance and have obligations to report information about any actual or suspected child abuse or neglect.

Child safety and wellbeing is a shared responsibility between Playgroup Tasmania, all employees, volunteers, contractors, partner organisations and members of the Playgroup Tasmania community.

Playgroup Tasmania supports and respects all children, staff and volunteers. Playgroup Tasmania is committed to the cultural safety of Aboriginal children, and those from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, and to providing a safe environment for children living with a disability. Staff, volunteers and participants recognise that when at playgroup the parent or caregiver retains the responsibility for their child. The primary focus of playgroup activities is to create opportunities for young children, parents, families and communities to come together to learn and develop through informal play activities and social interaction.

Playgroup Tasmania recognises that playgroup participation can play a role in child safety and wellbeing:

- The overall wellbeing of families contributes to the safety of children, and playgroups can play a significant role in supporting the wellbeing of families.
- Playgroups help keep children and families safe through connection to others in their community.
- Playgroups provide an opportunity for positive parenting strategies to be modelled and for children and families to engage with other members of their community, building community connectedness and a sense of belonging.
- Playgroups provide opportunities for children and families to access information and resources about child safety and wellbeing and can be a point of referral into or out of the targeted service system.
- A focus on early intervention and prevention is more effective in the long-term than responding to crises and treating the effects of neglect and abuse.
- All families have strengths that can be built upon to keep children safe and well.
- Playgroups build capacity and strength in our families and communities by promoting best practice in parenting and sharing information on child development.

Definitions

For definitions of the terminology used in this policy please refer to the separate document – Playgroup Tasmania Data Dictionary.

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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

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)
[Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities \(CRPD\)](#)

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

Current Information

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)

National Principles for Child Safe Organisations <https://childsafe.humanrights.gov.au/national-principles>

Responsibilities

The Playgroup Tasmania Board has responsibility and oversight of all policies. The Board leads and champions a child safe and child friendly organisational culture through their leadership, personal behaviours and setting Board level strategies, policies and direction.

The CEO of Playgroup Tasmania has ultimate responsibility for ensuring that appropriate and effective internal control systems are in place for all programs to promote child safety and wellbeing.

The CEO is responsible for:

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- Ensuring all staff, contractors and volunteers are aware of relevant laws, organisational policies and procedures and the Playgroup Tasmania Child Safety and Wellbeing Code of Conduct.
- Ensuring all adults within the Playgroup Tasmania community are aware of their obligations to report any actual and suspected abuse and neglect of a child in accordance with these policies and procedures.
- Providing support for staff, contractors and volunteers in undertaking their child safety responsibilities.
- Ensuring that all staff and contractors abide by the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations.

All staff, volunteers and contractors share responsibility for the safety and wellbeing of children and must:

- Familiarise themselves with the relevant laws, the National Principles, the Commonwealth Child Safe Framework and Playgroup Tasmania's policy and procedures in relation to child safety and wellbeing, and comply with all requirements.
- Report any reasonable belief that a child's safety is at risk to the relevant authorities and fulfil any obligations under mandatory reporting legislation.
- Report any suspicion that a child's safety may be at risk to their Playgroup Tasmania supervisor (NB this does not negate the responsibility to report to the relevant authorities as outlined above).
- Provide an environment that is supportive of all children's emotional and physical safety.
- Encourage the communities in which they engage to be aware of and informed about child safety and wellbeing.

All staff and volunteers of Playgroup Tasmania must ensure that they:

- Abide by the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations.
- Promote child safety at all times.
- Assess the risk of child abuse and neglect within their area of control and eradicate or minimise any risk to the extent possible.
- Provide education about the prevention and detection of child abuse and neglect (including information about grooming), and pathways to advice and specialist support.
- Facilitate the reporting of any inappropriate behaviour or suspected abusive activities.

Playgroup Tasmania Inc Child Safe Organisation Commitments

A commitment to child safety and wellbeing (National Principle 1)

The commitment of Playgroup Tasmania to the safety and wellbeing of children will be reflected in the policies and procedures of the organisation. Playgroup Tasmania has child safety and wellbeing being at the forefront of thought, value and actions of staff and volunteers of the organisation.

Taking child participation seriously (National Principle 2)

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Children's voices will be included in policy development and review. Playgroup Tasmania will actively involve children in an age-appropriate manner and provide child accessible versions of the child safety and wellbeing policy and other policies focused on the rights of children (e.g. complaints policy).

Involving families and communities (National Principle 3)

Families and community members will be made aware of the child safety and wellbeing policy and will have meaningful opportunities to participate in policy development and review. Playgroup Tasmania will demonstrate transparency as it undertakes policy and procedure review and will be responsive to complaints (see National Principle 6).

Respecting equity and diversity (National Principle 4)

Playgroup Tasmania aims to be welcoming, friendly, equitable and inclusive of all children and families and will strive to represent the diversity within Tasmanian communities. The organisation will aim to provide information to children, families and the community which is easily accessible and culturally appropriate.

Ensuring that staff are suitable and supported (National Principle 5)

Playgroup Tasmania will follow a stringent recruitment (including obtaining National Police Check, copies and checks of Working with Vulnerable People Registration and thorough reference checks) and induction process that outline the expectations of staff in creating a child safe and child friendly environment. Playgroup Tasmania staff and volunteers will undertake training in child safety and will be provided with up-to-date information in relation to reporting protocols (see National Principle 7). Playgroup Tasmania staff and volunteers will be provided with access to support and debriefing where there has been concerns about the wellbeing of a child.

Child focused complaint systems (National Principle 6)

Playgroup Tasmania recognises the importance of supporting each child's right to raise their concerns about the safety and wellbeing of themselves and others. Playgroup Tasmania has a feedback system that encourages open and honest feedback and complaints from all persons, including children.

Staff knowledge, skills and awareness (National Principle 7)

Playgroup Tasmania staff and volunteers will undertake an induction process that includes a focus on child safety and wellbeing.

Staff and volunteers will have the opportunity to access periodic training on child's rights, child development, the organisation's policies and procedures, recognising signs of harm or abuse, responding to disclosures, understanding and responding to harmful behaviours by a child towards another child, record keeping, risk assessment and management, external reporting obligations and creating culturally safe environments.

Staff will have the opportunity to engage in ongoing professional development and information exchange in relation to child safety and wellbeing.

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Safe physical and online environments (National Principle 8)

Risk assessments and management processes of the physical environments accessed by children will be undertaken.

Staff and volunteers will be required to use online environments in line with Playgroup Tasmania's Code of Conduct

Review of child safe policies and practices (National Principle 9)

The Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy will be reviewed on a regular basis, at a minimum every 2 years. The Policy will also be reviewed where there has been changes to legislation or standards, or where an incident has occurred that prompts a need to review the policy.

Documenting policies and procedures (National Principle 10)

The child safety and wellbeing policy will be made available: online, in staff induction materials, in each playgroup's resource toolkit and displayed at playgroup venues where possible.

A plain English version will be provided in the future.

Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy

Related Documents

United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (Appendix 1 below)
National Principles for Child Safe Organisations (Appendix 2 below)
Playgroup Tasmania Child Safety and Wellbeing Reporting Policy and Procedures
Playgroup Tasmania Child Safety and Wellbeing Incident Reporting form
Playgroup Tasmania Child Safety and Wellbeing Code of Conduct
Playgroup Tasmania Child Safety and Wellbeing Signed Statement

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Appendix 1

United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child

Playgroup Tasmania supports the principles of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) under which every child has the right to:

1. Be treated fairly no matter what
2. Have a say about decisions affecting them
3. Live and grow up healthy
4. Have people do what is best for you
5. Know who you are and where you come from
6. Believe what you want
7. Privacy
8. Find out information and express yourself
9. Be safe no matter where you are
10. Be cared for and have a home
11. Education, play and cultural activities
12. Help and protection if you need it.

For further information see: <https://www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/crc.aspx>

Appendix 2

National Principles for Child Safe Organisations

1. Child safety and wellbeing is embedded in organisational leadership, governance and culture
2. Children and young people are informed about their rights, participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously
3. Families and communities are informed and involved in promoting child safety and wellbeing
4. Equity is upheld and diverse needs respected in policy and practice
5. People working with children and young people are suitable and supported to reflect child safety and wellbeing values in practice
6. Processes for complaints and concerns are child focused
7. Staff and volunteers are equipped with the knowledge, skills and awareness to keep children and young people safe through ongoing education and training
8. Physical and online environments promote safety and wellbeing while minimising the opportunity for children and young people to be harmed
9. Implementation of the national child safe principles is regularly reviewed and improved
10. Policies and procedures document how the organisation is safe for children and young people.

For further information see: <https://childsafe.humanrights.gov.au/national-principles>

Appendix 3

United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

Playgroup Tasmania supports the principles of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities under which every person with a disability has the right to

- a) Respect for inherent dignity, individual autonomy including the freedom to make one's own choices, and independence of persons
- b) Non-discrimination
- c) Full and effective participation and inclusion in society
- d) Respect for difference and acceptance of persons with disabilities as part of human diversity and humanity
- e) Equality of opportunity
- f) Accessibility
- g) Equality between men and women
- h) Respect for the evolving capacities of children with disabilities and respect for the right of children with disabilities to preserve their identities.

For further information see: <https://humanrights.gov.au/our-work/disability-rights/united-nations-convention-rights-persons-disabilities-uncrpd>