

Playcentre Aotearoa's Child Protection Procedure



Licensing Criteria for Centre-based Education and Care Services 2008 (as amended May 2016):

HS31: There is a written child protection policy that meets the requirements of the Children Act 2014. The policy contains provisions for the identification and reporting of child abuse and neglect, and information about how the service will keep children safe from abuse and neglect, and how it will respond to suspected child abuse and neglect. The policy must be reviewed every three years.

HS32: All practicable steps are taken to protect children from exposure to inappropriate material (for example, of an explicitly sexual or violent nature).

1.0	How we keep tamariki safe at Playcentre
1.1	Tamariki are supervised at all times , with a minimum of a 1:5 Adult to Child Ratio. Children aged under 2.5 must be accompanied by a parent or caregiver at all times.
1.2	There is a minimum of 2 adults on any session and at all times that children are present , the exception being when a parent is with their own tamariki
1.3	Centres to use an "open door" policy. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Adults are discouraged from being out of sight or alone with a child. b) Efforts will be made to remain visible to others. c) Opportunities are limited for adults to be out of sight and alone with children.
1.4	Adults attending to the toilet needs, personal care or wash down/showering of a child other than their own child will inform another adult . The second adult should maintain line of sight if possible, or maintain an awareness of the situation and check-in as needed.
1.5	Tamariki have the right to privacy.
1.6	Tamariki should have, at the very least, either underwear or a nappy on during sessions. No child should be left naked.
1.7	When tamariki are sleeping at Playcentre consideration is given to ensuring visibility – whilst maintaining quiet, restful sleep spaces.
1.8	<p>Physical Contact</p> <p>Appropriate physical contact:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Physical contact between tamariki and adults is normal, natural and desirable, and should be used by adults to show affection, to comfort, to reassure them and to give praise, as well as taking care of their physical needs. b) Where a child is harming themselves or others, you may need to carefully and gently briefly block their action, in order to intervene and prevent harm <p>Inappropriate physical contact</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> c) It is inappropriate to force unwanted affection or touching on a child. d) It is unacceptable to immobilise, restrain or place a child in solitary confinement.



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1.9	<p>All practicable steps are taken to protect tamariki from exposure to inappropriate material (for example, of an explicitly sexual or violent nature). This includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Magazines and other printed material brought into the Centre are checked prior to access by tamariki to ensure they are appropriate - Personal electronic devices, such as mobile phones, are kept where tamariki cannot access them during session time, unless under the supervision of adults. - If tamariki are using internet-connected devices as part of their learning, safe search tools are engaged and adults closely supervise the activity.
1.10	<p>All people employed to work in a Centre (or Centres) will be safety checked and/or police vetted, depending on the requirements relating to their role. Where a role has regular contact with tamariki (at least one day a week or four times a month), they will be safety checked, following the Safety Checking Procedure. Where they do not have regular contact, the employee will be police vetted before having unsupervised access to children, and the form will be submitted no later than 2 weeks after they have been employed.</p>
1.11	<p>Any contractor, or the employee of a contractor, who has, or is likely to have, unsupervised access to children at the Centre during normal opening hours will also be required to complete a police vet prior to having such access.</p> <p>The Centre will let the Regional office know that a contractor is coming on site as soon as possible, and the Regional Office will arrange for a police vet, and communicate the result to the Centre President or equivalent.</p>
1.12	<p>Training</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) New Playcentre members will be familiarised with the Child Protection Policy and these procedures as part of their induction process. b) The Playcentre Education Programme contains information regarding Child Protection within the Playcentre Introductory Award, which all members are encouraged to complete c) Centres will review this policy and procedure as part of regular policy review at least every three years d) People with the Persons Responsible qualifications will receive refresher Child Protection training at least every two years. e) Child Protection training will be provided to Regional employees involved in the Child Protection Process at least every two years. <p>Regional staff will be given the opportunity to discuss anonymised situations to build their knowledge of ways to reduce risk, increase safety and respond to child protection situations.</p>



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2.0 Child Protection Response Process: What to do when....				
	When abuse is witnessed	When a child discloses	When signs of abuse or neglect are suspected	Allegations/concerns about Employees
2.1	<p>***Phone the POLICE if you believe the child is in IMMEDIATE DANGER. The Police are the only people who can keep or remove a child from a family. ***</p>		<p>See Indicators of Abuse or Neglect (5.0) below for <u>some</u> of the signs of abuse or neglect.</p>	<p>When an employee is suspected, the same Child Protection Response processes apply.</p>
2.2	<p>Take action if safe to do so.</p> <p>The safety and well-being of the child is paramount. At Playcentre it is also important to consider the safety of yourself and others.</p> <p>Remove the child from immediate danger if it is safe to do so and ensure that a Centre member (whom the child is comfortable with) stays with the child. If not, phone the POLICE immediately.</p>	<p>Don't Panic - Listen to the child:</p> <p>Disclosures by children are often subtle and need to be handled with care.</p> <p>Be aware of the child's cultural identity and how that may affect interpretation of their behaviour and language.</p>	<p>Follow these procedures</p> <p>This process must be followed regardless of who the suspected abuser is.</p> <p><i>The interest and wellbeing of our children is our prime consideration.</i></p>	<p>ALL matters involving allegations against employees MUST be escalated to the Regional Manager. They will take all necessary steps and keep senior Centre members informed as appropriate and where it is not in breach of confidentiality.</p>
2.3	<p>Ensure the alleged abuser is not left on their own within the Centre premises.</p> <p>a) A senior Centre member should always remain with them.</p> <p>b) You cannot stop them from leaving</p>	<p>Reassure the child</p> <p>Let the child know that they are not in trouble and have done the right thing.</p>	<p>Consider all available information about the child and their environment.</p>	<p>To ensure the child is kept safe, Regional or National management-following appropriate employment procedures- will suspend an employee under investigation for suspected abuse whilst investigation occurs.</p>



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	the Centre.			
2.4	Do not question or interview the child.	Do not interview the child You can ask open - ended prompts e.g. "What happened next?" , but otherwise do not question the child.	Do not question or interview the child.	Playcentre Aotearoa disciplinary procedures must be followed, including suspension procedures.
2.5	Maintain confidentiality and keep the alleged abuser informed about what is happening.	Do not make promises that can't be kept e.g. "I will keep you safe now".	Do not confront the person you believe may be abusing or neglecting the child/ren	Regional or National Management will consult with Oranga Tamariki and/or the Police before taking any further actions.
2.6	Complete an Injury, Incident or Illness form , and if serious injury or incident occurred notify, the Regional office, Worksafe and the Ministry of Education.	Support the child <u>If the child is visibly distressed:</u> Provide appropriate reassurance and re-engage in appropriate activities under supervision until they can participate in ordinary activities. <u>If the child is not in immediate danger:</u> Re-involve the child in ordinary activities and explain what you are going to do next.	Even if a parent is suspected of abuse, we cannot prevent a child from going home	
2.7	Even if abuse is witnessed, we cannot prevent a child from going home.	Even if a parent is suspected of abuse, we cannot prevent a child from going home.		



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2.8	<p>Record factual observations of anything that raises concerns, as soon as possible.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) Anything said by the child – word for word. ii) Date, time, location and names of any members that may be relevant. iii) Factual concerns or observations that have led to suspicion of abuse or neglect. (e.g., any physical, behavioural or developmental concerns). iv) Any action taken. v) Any other relevant information that may be relevant. vi) The details of the person recording information. vii) The details of the person verifying the information recorded. viii) Ensure confidential information is stored securely. It is not appropriate to store this information in the Centres shared files such as onedrive or email. It should be stored at the Regional office with the Centre Support Coordinator. <p>You may use the Playcentre Aotearoa Child Protection Record Form</p>
2.9	<p>Do not act alone, Raise concerns directly with the right person:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Centre: Centre President (or equivalent), Centre Support Worker (CSW) ▪ Regional: Regional role responsible for Centre Support (i.e. CSC) OR/ ▪ National: Service Delivery Manager or General Manager <p>They will facilitate appropriate action to be taken. Confidentiality will be maintained. You may escalate the response if the initial person is taking no action, or is involved in the concern.</p> <p>AND / OR</p> <p>Oranga Tamariki on 0508 FAMILY (0508 326 459) or the Police</p> <p>NB: if you contact Oranga Tamariki or the Police directly, please also contact the Regional or National office to enable them to ensure appropriate support is provided to the Centre. The Regional office will notify the Ministry of Education.</p>
2.10	<p>Where a serious injury or incident occurs at the Centre, the Serious Harm Investigation Form will also need to be completed, and the Ministry of Education notified (see Illness, Injury and Incident Procedures Q9.4.2).</p>
NOTES:	<p>Every situation is different</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) It is important to consider all available information about the child concerned, their home environment, and any significant events before reaching conclusions. b) Adults at Playcentre hold a unique position, being both teachers and whānau. c) It is important to acknowledge this could result in a possible conflict of interest with cases of abuse or suspected abuse. d) Regulation 56 of the Education (Early Childhood Services) Regulations 2008 require that where we have reasonable grounds to believe a person has physically ill-treated, abused, or committed a crime against children; or in guiding or controlling a child, has subjected the child to solitary confinement, immobilisation, or deprivation of food, drink, warmth, shelter, or protection – then we must ensure that they are kept from coming into contact with tamariki. If the alleged abuser is a Playcentre member, this means with the appropriate consultation and given the significance of the allegation, any Playcentre person under investigation for suspected abuse will be required to suspend attendance and duties at



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	<p>Playcentre whilst investigation occurs.</p> <p>e) "It is normal to feel uncertain, however it is important that we can recognise when something is wrong, especially when we notice a pattern or several signs that make us concerned" Children's Action Plan publication "Safer organisations, safer children"</p> <p>Confidentiality and information sharing</p> <p>The Privacy Act 1993 and the Oranga Tamariki Act 1989 allow information to be shared to keep tamariki safe when abuse or suspected abuse is reported or investigated. Note that under sections 15 and 16 of the Oranga Tamariki Act 1989, any person who believes that a child has been, or is likely to be, harmed physically, emotionally or sexually or ill-treated, abused, neglected or deprived may report the matter to Oranga Tamariki or the Police and, provided the report is made in good faith, no civil, criminal or disciplinary proceedings may be brought against them. This is referred to as a Protected Disclosure.</p>	
3.0	Responding to other concerns as outlined in Children's Action Plan publication "Safer organisations, safer children"	
3.1	Where a concern about a child doesn't amount to suspicion of abuse or neglect, it could be harmful to the wellbeing of the child and their whānau to make a notification to the statutory agencies. Instead, Playcentre Aotearoa at Centre level with support from their Regional team as required, should work to partner with social service providers in their communities to identify and address the needs of the child.	
3.2	<p>The services available in each community will vary and may include a range of government and non-government providers who will be able to help the child and their whānau. For example, Strengthening Families, Whānau Ora, Iwi Social Services, Social Workers in Schools, Children's Teams, whānau counselling agencies, budget services and mental health and drug and alcohol services.</p> <p>It is important to build good working relationships with these providers to ensure that we can appropriately share relevant information to ensure the safety and wellbeing of our tamariki.</p>	
3.3	Regional Offices identify and build connections with these providers in the regional area with the aid of the local Ministry of Social Development.	
3.4	You can make referrals for learning support by either emailing learning.supportmailbox@education.govt.nz or calling 0800 622 222 (NZ only).	
4.0	Regional Office Procedures following a report of a Child Protection Concern	WHO
4.1	Centres direct any concerns to the person responsible for Centre support at the Regional Office, or directly to the Service Delivery Manager.	
4.2	<p>Recording</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Advise the person raising the concern to formally record details, as outlined in 2.8. You may use the Playcentre Aotearoa Child Protection Record Form 	<p>Person raising concern and Centre Support</p>



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	<p>2. Remind the person raising the concern that they need to maintain confidentiality and should not discuss this further with others at their Centre or in their community.</p> <p>3. As the Playcentre employee being notified of the suspected abuse or neglect maintain a record of your involvement, including</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) Date, time and communication method and name of person providing notification. ii) Advice given. iii) Next steps discussed. iv) Any action taken. v) Any other information that may be relevant. <p style="text-align: center;">Relevant information can inform any future actions.</p>	<p>Coordinator (CSC) or Regional Manager (RM)</p>
<p>4.3</p>	<p>Decision- making</p> <p>Child protection concerns raised should be dealt with within a reasonable timeframe. This will need to be assessed on a case by case basis.</p> <p>In the case of a Centre member;</p> <p>The Centre Support Coordinator (or other Regional role responsible for Centre support) should discuss the case with their Regional Manager. Outcomes sought;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) Is it required to be raised with Oranga Tamariki or the Police? ii) What are the next steps required? iii) If not a child protection issue, what other support is required? (See Child Protection RESPONSE Procedures - Responding to other concerns) <p>If there is reason to investigate the allegation and/or reasonable belief that there is a child protection issue, then with the appropriate consultation and given the significance of the allegation, any Playcentre person under investigation for suspected abuse will be required to suspend attendance and duties at Playcentre whilst investigation occurs.</p> <p>They will be provided with a contact person, and support will be offered, recognising that this is a difficult situation. Their child/ren may still attend Playcentre but would need to be brought by a different adult.</p> <p>In the case of an employee;</p> <p>The Regional Manager should discuss the case with Service Delivery Manager</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) When an employee is suspected, the same processes apply, however Playcentre Aotearoa disciplinary procedures must also be followed. ii) To ensure the child is kept safe, Regional or National management- following appropriate employment procedures- will suspend an employee under investigation for suspected abuse whilst 	<p>Centre Support Coordinator (CSC) and Regional Manager (RM) OR Regional Manager (RM) and Service Delivery Manager</p>



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	<p>investigation occurs.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Playcentre management will consult with Oranga Tamariki and/or the Police. b) Disciplinary processes will be followed, such as giving the employee the opportunity to have a support person present, to be given fair notice of any disciplinary meeting, and to be provided with all information that will be relied upon to make a decision in regard to outcomes. 	
4.4	<p>Notifying authorities</p> <p>You will need to notify Oranga Tamariki promptly if there is a belief that a child has been, or is likely to be abused or neglected. Preferably this will be done by a Regional team role, with the person who originally reported available to answer further questions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Initial contact with Oranga Tamariki should be via the telephone contact centre (see details below) as this enables both parties to discuss the nature of the concerns and appropriate response options. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Phone: 0508 Family (0508 326 459) Email: contact@ot.govt.nz <p>Oranga Tamariki will</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Make the decision to inform the parents or caregivers, in consultation with our organisation. - Advise what, if any, immediate action may be appropriate, including referring the concern to the Police. b) Contact your local Ministry of Education Office and follow processes as required by that office. 	<p>Centre Support Coordinator (CSC) Or Regional Manager (RM)</p> <p>Or</p> <p>Service Delivery Manager</p> <p>Or</p> <p>Person raising concern (with support of staff)</p>
4.5	<p>Following the advice of Oranga Tamariki</p> <p>Oranga Tamariki advice will include what, if any, immediate action may be appropriate, including referring the concern to the Police.</p> <p>Oranga Tamariki is responsible for looking into the situation to find out what may be happening, whether Playcentre Aotearoa needs to work with the whānau or put them in touch with people in their community who can help.</p>	<p>Centre Support Coordinator (CSC)</p> <p>Or</p> <p>Regional Manager (RM)</p> <p>Or</p> <p>Service Delivery Manager</p>
4.6	<p>Storing relevant information</p> <p>Securely store:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) The record of the concern. ii) A record of any related discussions (including copies of 	<p>Centre Support Coordinator (CSC)</p> <p>Or</p> <p>Regional Manager</p>



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	<p>correspondence, where appropriate).</p> <p>iii) A record of any advice received.</p> <p>iv) A record of the action taken, including any rationale.</p> <p>v) This concern with any earlier concerns, if the notification is based on an accumulation of concerns (rather than a specific incident).</p> <p>vi) Retain records until the child has left Playcentre for 7 years.</p>	<p>(RM)</p> <p>Or</p> <p>Service Delivery Manager</p>
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5.0 Indicators of abuse or neglect		
	Indicators of potential abuse may include	Indicators of potential neglect may include
Physical signs	e.g., unexplained injuries, burns, fractures, unusual or excessive itching, genital injuries, sexually transmitted diseases.	e.g., looking rough and uncared for, dirty, without appropriate clothing, underweight.
Developmental delays	e.g., small for their age, cognitive delays, falling behind in school, poor speech and social skills.	
Emotional abuse/neglect	e.g., sleep problems, low self-esteem, obsessive behaviour, inability to cope in social situations, sadness/loneliness and evidence of self-harm.	
Behavioural concerns	e.g., age- inappropriate sexual interest or play, fear of a certain person or place, eating disorders/substance abuse, disengagement/neediness, aggression.	e.g., disengagement/ neediness, eating disorders/substance abuse, aggression.
The child talking about things that indicate abuse	Sometimes called an allegation or disclosure.	
Neglectful supervision		e.g., out and about unsupervised, left alone, no safe home to return to.
Medical neglect		e.g., persistent nappy rash or skin disorders or other untreated medical issues.





RESOURCES

<https://www.education.govt.nz/assets/Documents/Early-Childhood/Licensing-criteria/Working-together-to-keep-CYP-safe.pdf>

<http://www.education.govt.nz/assets/Uploads/VCAPracticalGuide.pdf>: Children Act 2014: a practical guide for early childhood education services

REFERENCES

Playcentre Aotearoa's Child Protection Policy

Playcentre Aotearoa's Child Protection Response Flowchart

Children's Act 2014

Privacy Act 1993

Playcentre Aotearoa Child Protection Record Form

<https://www.orangatamariki.govt.nz/assets/Uploads/Safer-Organisations-safer-children.pdf>

