

Child Protection

Policy Statement

Kids Biz is committed to ensuring the safety and welfare of children in the general community and within the services they operate. Implementation of clear, decisive procedures enable Kids Biz and stakeholders to respond quickly and appropriately where there is concern for the safety or well-being of a child.

Procedures are in place to ensure that:

- Child-related employment in Kids Biz OSHC is identified and positions are designated and managed in accordance with child protection legislation;
- Mandatory reporting requirements are met;
- Employment screening is undertaken for prospective appointments to all positions designated as child-related employment;
- Disclosures are sought from existing and prospective employees in designated positions;
- Reportable allegations are handled professionally and sensitively to meet legislative requirements and guarantee the safety and privacy of individuals.

Policy Considerations

- Keeping Children and Young People Safe – A Shared Community Responsibility (ACT Gov. Community Services) 2019
- Section 356 of the *Children and Young People Act 2008* (ACT)
- Working with Vulnerable People (Background Checking) Act 2011
- Children and Young People Act 2008

Mandatory Reporting

- All staff at Kids Biz OSHC are mandated reporters and must make a report, in-line with legislation, to Child and Youth Protection Services (CYPS) if they believe, on reasonable grounds, that a child or young person has experienced or is experiencing sexual abuse or non-accidental physical injury. Sexual abuse must also be reported to the police.
- Although not mandated, staff are encouraged to report suspected instances of neglect.
- Educators can also work with families to assist them to access early intervention support or provide them with relevant information or contacts to assist in their parenting role. This may include referrals to support services and child health services.

Within Kids Biz OSHC services the following practices must be undertaken to support children and families in accordance with the responsibilities of child protection legislation.

Procedure for Mandatory Reporting

- All staff are mandatory reporters and are therefore required by law to report any belief on reasonable grounds that a child or young person may have experienced sexual abuse or non-accidental physical injury. Staff are also encouraged to report suspected instances of neglect. This belief may arise from;
 - A child disclosing experiences of abuse to the staff member
 - Being advised by someone else that the child has been abused
 - Observations of the child or young person's physical condition or behaviours
 - Observations of the physical conditions or behaviours of the parents/caregivers
- A mandated reporter is not required to prove that abuse has occurred

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- If the staff member considers that a child is at immediate danger or in a life-threatening situation they are to call 000. If the situation requires non-urgent police attention they are to call ACT Policing on 131 444.
- If the staff member wishes to discuss their concerns they can receive support from the following people/organisations; (See Below for Contact Details)
 - Kids Biz OSHC Coordinator and Management Team
 - Child and Youth Protection Services Mandated Reporters Line(1300 556 728)
 - Children's Education and Care Association
 - The *Keeping Children and Young People Safe* Community Services Directorate Website
- Apart from discussion with the above people and organisations, the staff member should ensure the confidentiality of any information and refrain discussing their concern with anybody not directly involved in the reporting process or protection of the child.
- The concerned member of staff and/or the Coordinator can refer to the *Keeping Children and Young People Safe – A shared community responsibility* document published by the ACT Government (accessed online or via the PDF copy sent to staff upon commencement of employment) which aims to assist all mandatory reports to assess whether a concern reaches the threshold of significant harm requiring reporting, as well as a more extensive guide to the reporting process.
- If a child has disclosed abuse or neglect, the staff member needs to treat the information with sensitivity and awareness of the child's emotional wellbeing and possible distress. For further ways to communicate during this disclosure refer to *Keeping Children and Young People Safe – A shared community responsibility* Child Concern Reports can be submitted online through the Child and Youth Protection Services website.
- Where no formal action is taken as result of the report; staff should remember, all families from time to time experience periods of particular stress. These can occur at any time and for very many reasons. These families need support from the community at these times rather than a suggestion that their children are at risk of harm.
- Staff members have a responsibility to support all families and to offer ideas for supports that might assist them especially during times of short-term difficulties. Staff should provide families with assistance, information and support including referral to other services e.g. family counselling, child health, behaviour and development services, financial support, housing assistance and information that might assist them in times of stress.

Contacts for Making a Child Concern Report

To make a Child Concern Report use the online portal at <https://form.act.gov.au/smartforms/csd/child-concern-report>

Child and Youth Protection Services

- General Public Line (24 hours) -1300 556 729
- Mandated Persons Line (24 hours) – 1300 556 728
- Email childprotection@act.gov.au

Other Important Contacts

- Police (for urgent and immediate assistance) – 000
- Police (for non-urgent reports where a child is at risk of harm or there is a belief that they have experience sexual abuse) – 131 444
- The Community Services Directorate Website – <https://www.communityservices.act.gov.au/ocyfs>
- Children and Young People Act 2008 – http://www.austlii.edu.au/au/legis/act/consol_act/caypa2008242/

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Information Required for a Child Concern Report

- Name and date of birth of the child(ren) or young person(s)
- Home address(es) of the child(ren) or young person(s) and any known previous addresses of the family
- Current whereabouts of the child(ren) or young person(s)
- Name of parents/ aliases and contact details
- Name of known siblings
- Nature of abuse and neglect
- Known supports to the child, young person and family including extended family
- Details about when and how you became aware of the information

General Practices for Further Children Protection

Staff

Training of staff

- Kids Biz OSHC will provide regular opportunities for staff to become familiar with their responsibilities under child protection legislation. This may include staff attending training.
- Staff members are provided with a copy of *Keeping Children and Young People Safe: A Shared Community Responsibility* when they commence employment

Employment of Staff

- All staff seeking employment either casually or permanently must hold an ACT Working with Vulnerable People card.

Where a Complaint is made about a staff member, or someone in the Service

- The person making the report should follow the advice of an appropriate member of the Kids Biz OSHC Management Team. All complaints will be handled as appropriate by the Coordinator and Management Team.
- The staff member who the complaint is about will not be involved in the investigative question but may be asked to provide a statement.
- The matter will be treated with strict confidentiality and dealt with in accordance with the Children and Young People Act
- For the protection of both the children and the staff member involved, the staff member may be required to take special leave or be removed from duties involving direct care and contact with children, until the situation is followed up or resolved.
- Refer to the 'Reportable Conduct' policy for full reporting process.

Facilities, Equipment and Occupational Health and Safety

- The service endeavours to provide a safe and hazard-free environment to prevent any serious injury to the children.
- For safety and risk management methods undertaken by the service, refer to the following policy and procedure documents
 - Building Equipment Repairs and Maintenance
 - Injury and Trauma
 - Occupational Health and Safety [OHS]
 - Risk Management

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Kids Biz Holidays & Sports OSHC Policies & Procedures

Document Version Control

Version Date	Changes
05/12/2018	Full review
27/08/2019	Document version history added
08/07/2020	Full review
22/09/2021	Full review. References updated to reflect ACT contact details

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