

2.2 Child Protection Policy

1. Purpose

Every child has a right to be cared for in a safe and secure environment at all times. My Place Family Day Care encourages nurturing of both children's emotional and physical needs. Where there is a disclosure, grounds for suspicion or identified child abuse, this will be dealt with sensitively and reassuringly in accordance with the Service policies and mandatory reporting obligations.

2. Scope

This policy applies to the Nominated Supervisor/s, Coordinators, Educators, Educator Assistants, parents/guardians and children.

3. Definition

Approved Provider: Inala Community House (ICH) has approval from the Federal Government to operate an approved FDC service.

Service: My Place Family Day Care, whose Approved Provider is Inala Community House.

Parent/Guardian: the person responsible for the payment of fees and who is paid the Child Care Subsidy. Herein after referred to as Parents.

** PLEASE NOTE: this does not include a parent who is prohibited by a court order from having contact with the child.

Educator: a suitably qualified person who is registered with the Service.

A visitor: is a person visiting someone or somewhere, especially socially or as a tourist (Oxford English Dictionary). For the purposes of this policy, a visitor becomes a resident after 30 continuous days of residing in the same premises.

Visitors include:

- Coordination Unit staff,
- Tradespersons,
- Other people that may come into the Educator's premises with the family,
- Friends who drop in during the day, including other Educators,
- Family members who do not reside at the Educator's residence,
- Families that are at the Educator's premises for an interview while children are in care,
- People that are staying with the Educator short-term – not permanently residing with the Educator.

Visitors do not include:

- Families that are signing the children in and out on the attendance record,
- An educator's own family members or adults who reside with them, and permanent residents.

Mandatory Reporting: is a term used to describe the legislative requirement for selected groups of people to report suspected cases of child abuse and neglect to government authorities.

** PLEASE NOTE: under the Child Protection Act 1999, mandatory reporters are required to report concerns about a child who may have experienced significant physical or sexual abuse.

Mandatory Reporters:

- an approved provider,
- a nominated supervisor for an approved education and care service,
- an educator for an approved education and care service,
- a coordinator for an approved family day care service,
- an educator for an approved family day care service.

A child in need of protection: under the Child Protection Act 1999, is a child who:

- has suffered significant harm,
- is suffering significant harm, or
- is at unacceptable risk of suffering significant harm, and
- does not have a parent able and willing to protect the child from harm.

Reasonable grounds (the threshold for reporting): Reasonable suspicion that a child has suffered, is suffering or is at an unacceptable risk of suffering significant harm caused by physical or sexual abuse and may not have a parent able and willing to protect them.

Harm or suspected harm to a child is any detrimental effect of a significant nature on the child's physical, psychological or emotional wellbeing.

4. Policy

My Place Family Day Care is committed to ensuring the safety of all children and will respond to any situation where a child is harmed or suspected to have been harmed in a respectful, consistent manner that meets legislative requirements. The Service will employ active measures to prevent harm or child abuse, including risk minimisation strategies that aim to fulfill its commitment to protecting each child enrolled at the Service.

My Place Family Day Care and its Educators follow the ICH Child and Youth Risk Management Strategy.

4.1 Information and Training – obligations

The Service will ensure all staff, Educators and Educator Assistants are involved in an induction process, which outlines the Service's Child Protection Policies and Procedures.

The Service will ensure all staff, Educators and Educator Assistants are aware of the threshold for and have the capacity to undertake their mandatory reporting responsibilities.

The Service will ensure all volunteers and students are provided with the Child Protection Policy and have received Child Protection Training before placement at the Service.

The Service's staff, Educators and Educator Assistants will receive information, training and resources to build skills in identifying the indicators and responding to a child experiencing significant harm or abuse.

The Nominated Supervisor/s will attend Child Protection Training.

4.2 Supporting Families

The Service's staff, Educators and Educator Assistants will develop collaborative and supportive partnerships with families.

The Service will build strong connections with agencies able to assist families who may be vulnerable to access help before issues escalate through services such as Family and Child Connect and Intensive Family Support.

4.3 Identifying and Responding to Child Abuse

The Service acknowledges that the security and safety of children is the prime consideration in issues of suspected child abuse. The Service recognises the complexity and sensitivity surrounding issues of suspected harm or child abuse and will handle all cases confidentially and respectfully.

Where an Educator or Educator Assistant identifies indicators of abuse or suspects children are vulnerable to family violence or other forms of harm or abuse, they will notify the Nominated Supervisor/s.

4.3.1 Disclosure

The Service recognises children and young people can disclose harm or abuse at any time and acknowledges that initial, informal disclosure is important and may help with trust and any future investigation.

Staff, Educators and Educator Assistants will support the child or young person and document accurately the child's disclosure of harm or abuse. The staff member,

Educator or Educator Assistant who has received the disclosure will contact the Nominated Supervisor/s within 24 hours.

4.4. Reporting Abuse

The Service has systems and processes in place to ensure the reporting of suspected physical or sexual abuse is completed in accordance with its Mandatory Reporting obligations.

Educators will notify the Nominated Supervisor/s within 24 hours of any suspected abuse of a child enrolled at the Service.

The Educator, in consultation with Nominated Supervisor/s, will make notification to the Queensland Regulatory Authority in the event of suspected abuse occurring while a child is attending the service within 24 hours.

The Nominated Supervisor/s will notify the Chief Executive Officer of ICH of any suspected abuse that has occurred within the Service.

4.5. Protective Behaviours

The Service is committed to ensuring children have opportunities that support their development of protective behaviour strategies.

4.6. Record of Visitors

The visitor's record is a key strategy for recording and tracking all visitors to the Service and Educator's residence.

Educators will keep a record of all visitors to their residence in accordance with the Education and Care Services National Regulation 2011 (R.165 Visitors Record) during the time children enrolled at the Service are present. The record must be kept for a period of three (3) years after the date the record was completed.

The Coordinator and any other staff who visits an Educator will sign the visitor's record at the Educator's residence.

The Service will keep a record of visitors in accordance with the Education and Care Services National Regulation 2011 (R.165 Visitors Record) to the Service office. The record must be kept for a period of three (3) years after the date the record was completed.

4.7. Supervision

The Service recognises the supervision of children by an Educator is one of the key strategies for protecting children while they are being provided with education and care.

Educators will be alert and aware of the hazards, risks and the potential for accidents and injury to children.

Educators will consider how they supervise children while at their residence and when on an excursion or outing.

Educators will **never** leave a child enrolled in the Service alone with a visitor.

In the event that a child requires overnight care, the Educator will collaborate with a Nominated Supervisor or Coordinator to develop a risk management plan to consider the supervision and safety of the child.

Educators will ensure their family members are not left alone to supervise a child enrolled at the Service.

4.8. Breach of this Policy

Any breach of this policy by any ICH staff member, Educator, Educator Assistant or adult residing at the Educator's residence will be dealt with by the Nominated Supervisor/s or Chief Executive Officer in accordance with the 10.2 Grievance and Complaints Management Policy and the 8.21 Compliance with Policies and Legislation Procedure.

The Nominated Supervisor/s will be informed of all breaches to this policy and will notify the Chief Executive Officer.

5. Review

This policy remains in effect unless otherwise determined by resolution of the Board of Directors.

This policy will be reviewed every two years or sooner as required.

	Date	Details
V1.0	07/2015	Original Policy Issued
V2.0	12/2016	Policy Amended – submitted to board for ratification
V3.0	08/2017	Policy Amended – submitted to board for ratification
V4.0	11/2019	Policy Amended – submitted to board for ratification
V5.0	01/2021	Policy Amended – submitted to board for ratification <ul style="list-style-type: none">• External consultant engaged and significant amendments made
V6.0	20/02/2023	Policy Amended – submitted to board for ratification

6. Related Documents

Policies

1.2 Service Philosophy

3.1 Educational Program and Practice Policy

8.1 Assessment and Selection of Educators and Educator Assistant Policy

8.2 Staff, Volunteers and Student Policy

8.5 Monitoring and Support of Educators Policy

9.3 Stakeholder Participation Policy

10.3 Confidentiality Records and Register Management Policy

Procedures

2.4 Visitors to the Educators Home and Service Office Procedure

2.5 Supervision of Children Procedure

2.6 Identifying and Responding to Child Abuse Procedure

2.7 Reporting Child Abuse Procedure

8.12 Support of Educators and Educator Assistants Procedure

8.13 Managing Non-Compliance or Breaches of Policy Procedure or Legislation Procedure

10.5 Confidentiality and Privacy Procedure

10.6 Record Management and Storage Procedure

10.7 Register Management Procedure

Forms

Record of Visitors

Register of Visitors Staying Overnight

Excursion Permission & Risk Management Form

Other Documents

ICH Child and Youth Risk Management Strategy

References

Queensland Government, Department of child safety Youth and Women, Mandatory Reporting retrieved October 2019 from <https://www.csyw.qld.gov.au/child-family/protecting-children/about-child-protection/mandatory-reporting>

Australian Government, Australian Institute of Family Studies, Responding to children and young people's disclosure of abuse. Retrieved 30th October 2019 from: <https://aifs.gov.au/cfca/publications/responding-children-and-young-people-s-disclosures-abu>

Education and Care Services National Law 2010:

- s. 162A Persons in day-to-day charge and nominated supervisors to have child protection training
- s. 165 Offence to inadequately supervise children
- s. 167 Offence relating to protection of children from harm and hazard
- s. 170 Offence relating to unauthorised persons on education and care service premises

Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011:

- R.84 Aware of child protection law
- R.165 Record of visitors
- R.166 Children not to be left alone with others
- R.168 Education and care services must have policies and procedures

Working with Children (Risk Management and Screening) Act 2000

Working with Children (Risk Management and Screening) Regulation 2011

Child Protection (Mandatory Reporting-Mason's Law) Amendment Bill 2016

ACECQA, Guide to the National Quality Framework, 2018, Chapter 2 The National Quality Standards, Quality Area 7 - Governance and Leadership

- 7.1 Governance – Governance supports the operation of a quality service:
 - 7.1.2 Management systems: Systems are in place to manage risk and enable the effective management and operation of a quality service.
 - 7.1.3 Roles and Responsibilities – Roles and responsibilities are clearly defined, and understood, and support effective decision making and operation of the service.
- 7.2 Leadership – Effective leadership builds and promotes a positive organisational culture and professional learning community
 - 7.2.3 Development of professionals – Educators, coordinators and staff members performance is regularly evaluated, and individual plan are in place to support learning and development.