

### **Educating Children about Protective Behaviour**

**Educators will regularly include child protection issues in the curriculum. For example they will intentionally teach children:**

- about acceptable/unacceptable behaviour, and appropriate/inappropriate contact in a manner suitable to their age and level of understanding
- that they have a right to feel safe at all times
- to say 'no' to anything that makes them feel unsafe
- the difference between 'fun' scared that is appropriate risk taking and dangerous scared that is not ok
- to use their own skills to feel safe
- to recognise signs that they do not feel safe and need to be alert and think clearly
- that there is no secret too awful, no story too terrible, that they can't share with someone they trust
- that educators are available for them if they have any concerns
- to tell educators of any suspicious activities or people
- to recognise and express their feelings verbally and non-verbally
- that they can choose to change the way they are feeling.

Educators believe that:

- children are capable of the same range of emotions as adults
- children's emotions are real and need to be accepted by adults
- an adult's response to a child during their early emotional development can be hugely positive or detrimental depending on the adult's reaction
- children are very in touch with their bodies' reactions to their emotions
- children who better understand their body's response to an emotion are more able to foresee the outcome of a situation and avoid them or ask for help.

### ***Child Protection Agencies***

The following agencies have responsibilities regarding child protection. Our service will liaise with these services and agencies should child protection become an issue at our service.

#### ***Child Protection Helpline: Department of Family and Community Services***

- Receive, assess and where appropriate Investigate reports of children who are at risk of significant harm.
- May plan, conduct and manage Reports in conjunction with other agencies including NSW with Police, the NSW Health.
- Exchange relevant information with a range of agencies including NSW Police, NSW Health and the Department of Education and Communities.
- Provide, arrange and request care and/or support for children and families.
- Inform reporting agencies of the progress and outcomes of assessments and investigations as permitted by law.

#### ***Child Wellbeing Unit***

Child Wellbeing Units have been established in the four government agencies with the largest number of child protection reports. These include the Department of Education and Communities and the Department of Family and Community Services. They can be contacted through the Department's switchboard or contact details are available in the resources section of the ChildStory Reporter website.

#### ***NSW Ombudsman's Office***

- Monitors the investigation of and in some cases investigates reportable allegations made against employees in government and non-government agencies, such as children's services.
- The Ombudsman must be notified of all allegations of abuse or neglect of a child by a children's services employee.
- A volunteer is also counted as an employee in this situation.

Childrens' Services Employers must report to the NSW Ombudsman any reportable allegations and convictions made against an employee and ensure they are investigated by the Approved Provider/owner of the Child Care Service with appropriate actions being taken when the investigation is complete. The Approved Provider/owner of the Child Care Service must notify the Ombudsman within 30 days of becoming aware of any reportable allegations or conviction made against an employee in children's services.

Reportable allegations include any sexual offence, or sexual misconduct, committed against, with or in the presence of a child (including a child pornography offence), any assault, ill treatment or neglect of a child, any behaviour that causes psychological harm to a child.

Employees include:

- any employee of the agency, whether or not employed in connection with any work or activities of the agency that relates to children, and
- any individual engaged by the agency to provide services to children (including in the capacity as a volunteer) and
- work experience participants, students on placements, e.g. TAFE, secondary or tertiary students

The Ombudsman needs to be informed of any allegation regardless of the outcome. These matters are only reported to the Child Protection Helpline if they meet the threshold of significant harm.

Visit [www.ombo.nsw.gov.au](http://www.ombo.nsw.gov.au) for fact sheets and any forms required.

### ***The Office of the Children's Guardian***

The Office of the Children's Guardian is an independent government agency that works to protect children by promoting and regulating quality, child safe organisations and services. One of its roles is administering the Working With Children Check.

Children's services employers must report findings of sexual misconduct and serious physical assault involving children by a child related worker to the Office of the Children's Guardian. See the Fact Sheet 'Information for reporting bodies' at [www.kidsguardian.nsw.gov.au](http://www.kidsguardian.nsw.gov.au)