



Implementing child safe and aware policies into organisational everyday practice

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Introduction

- Save the Children Australia is one of 30 members of [Save the Children International](#) – the world's leading independent organisation for children.
- Globally, we support children in 124 countries around the world.
- Our vision is a world in which every child attains the right to survival, protection, development and participation.
- Save the Children Australia manages and implements programs that assist children in 29 [countries around the world](#). We directly deliver programs in the [Pacific region](#) and support children and families in our own community, running programs in more than 150 sites across [Australia](#).



Child Safeguarding

Within Save the Children, the term “**Child Safeguarding**” refers to the set of policies, procedures and practice that we employ to ensure that Save the Children itself is a child safe organisation.

It is the means by which we ensure that anyone who represents our organisation behaves appropriately towards children and never abuses the position of trust that comes with being a part of the Save the Children family.

Child Safe and Aware Policy at Save the Children

- Save the Children has in place a Child Protection Policy and child safeguarding measures to both respond to and prevent harm to children in the delivery of our programs
- HOWEVER – was it signed and put in a drawer or had it become part of everyday practice?



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Survey

In 2012 conducted a Survey on the implementation of the Policy and our child safeguarding practices.

Objectives:

- To understand whether the Policy was seen as just a “tick the box” exercise by staff

OR

- Whether the framework provided in the Policy had translated into behavioural and attitudinal change
- And child safeguarding had become part of organisational everyday practice at Save the Children



Why was this important?

When a Policy and child safeguarding measures move beyond compliance to become part of organisational everyday practice =

- ✓ Greatly enhances our effectiveness in providing a child safe organisation
- ✓ And strengthens our duty of care to do no harm to children



Why was this important?

The main findings and recommendations of this Survey provides staff and volunteer feedback on the most effective and meaningful child safe detection and prevention strategies which move Policy and child safeguarding measures into organisational everyday practice.

These findings are relevant in implementing child safeguarding Policy and measures across all sectors.



Survey Participation

- It was an important to obtain feedback from personnel operating in different locations and cultural contexts.
- The Survey was completed by 211 staff and volunteers from different provinces within the Solomon Islands, Vanuatu, PNG and Timor Leste as well as Australian based staff in both urban and remote locations including many Indigenous staff members.



Overall Findings

Moving beyond compliance to organisational everyday practice:

- The Survey results clearly revealed that the awareness of child safeguarding and staff roles and responsibilities in implementing child safeguarding had increased dramatically over the last 2 years as a result of the implementation of the Policy.
- Further staff and volunteers were extremely positive about the way the Policy and training had enhanced their understanding of child safeguarding and why the Child Protection Policy and Code of Conduct are so important to maintaining a child safe organisation.



Overall Findings

- Respondents revealed how they have more confidence working and interacting with children in a safe and respectful way as a result of these supportive child safeguarding measures.
- Respondents reflected how the Policy had made them more aware of child protection issues both within the workplace and the community and the part they played as parents, community members and role models for the protection of children.

Overall Findings



“The CP Policy has made me even more acutely aware of the importance of protecting children, and that as an employee of STC; I am bound by this commitment and mandate.” (Survey respondent)



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Main Findings & Recommendations

Specific Policy and Child Safeguarding Measures analysed in the Survey:

1. Child Protection Focal Points
2. Code of Conduct
3. Cultural and Local Relevance of the Policy
4. Internal Child Safeguarding Reporting Process
5. Training and Capacity Building



Main Findings & Recommendations

Child Protection Focal Points played an important part in moving the Policy beyond compliance into everyday practice

The Focal Points had developed trust with their staff and volunteers and were able to provide on an ongoing basis:

- ✓ a first point of contact for questions about the Policy and child safeguarding measures
 - ✓ known person to receive reports about the safety or wellbeing of a child or suspected breach of the Code of Conduct
 - ✓ local knowledge.
- They also provide the organisation with information on strengths of the Policy and where there are challenges or gaps.



Main Findings & Recommendations

Child Protection Focal Points

- The Survey results revealed that staff and volunteers highly value the knowledge and accessibility of their local Child Protection Focal Points in the Australian and overseas offices.
- The success and importance of role of Focal Points in implementation of the Policy and embedding child safeguarding measures into everyday practice was clear.



Main Findings & Recommendations

Code of Conduct provided clear guidance on everyday safe interaction with children

Respondents revealed how they have more confidence working and interacting with children in a safe and respectful way as a result of the Code of Conduct being:

- a supportive document for staff and volunteers
- increasing self awareness of own behaviours and practices in workplace and at home/community
- reduced misunderstandings

Main Findings & Recommendations

Code of Conduct

Question 31 - Do you consider the Code of Conduct provides you with guidance on working safely and positively with children and young people?

Number of responses - 169	
*Yes	95.9%
No	4.1%



Child Protection Policy Review

- Respondent Comments

- *It clearly outlines the do's and don'ts in regards to working with children. Situations become clearer and more simple, which allow STC staff to work in a safer and more supportive environment*
- *Improved the reputation of our organisation among other partner agencies and stakeholders and has enabled staff to better understand boundaries for working with children, particularly in complex situations where staff and participants may be related.*



Main Findings & Recommendations

Unless the Policy is Culturally or Contextually Relevant it will not result in becoming everyday practice

- Many respondents provided feedback that the current Policy had not adequately taken into account differing cultural and local contexts
- As a result staff were not able to apply the Policy in a meaningful or effective way to their everyday work in their communities
- This was a significant barrier to the Policy becoming part of the organisational child safe culture at Save the Children



Main Findings & Recommendations

Cultural and Local Relevance of the Policy

- Most commonly staff living and working in their community, particularly in remote communities explained that it was impossible to not spend time with children involved in Save the Children programs outside program times.
- These children are part of their everyday community lives and it would be difficult to maintain positive and respectful relationships if they were not able to interact with this group of children and young people on a day to day basis.

Main Findings & Recommendations

Recommendation

“Personnel should not spend time with children and young people involved in Save programs outside program times. However for personnel who live and work in the same communities and come into regular contact with children and young people outside program times, they should continue to interact with those children and young people in compliance with the Policy and Code of Conduct and in a way that can provide opportunities for mentoring and positive role modeling. Further personnel must ensure private/confidential information concerning those children or young people is not discussed with others out of work hours.”

Main Findings & Recommendations

Internal SCA Child Safeguarding Reporting Process must be clear and well managed to become organisational everyday practice





Main Findings & Recommendations

Child Safeguarding Reporting Process

More confidence to raise concerns or make reports due to a clearer reporting process

- Confident of who to go to, that confidentiality would be respected, the process would be well managed and be fair to all parties involved
- Reports have been made from staff, parents, Village Chiefs, and young people about Save the Children staff and volunteers over the last few years

Question 20 – Is there anything that would prevent you making a report?

Number of responses - 174	
*Nothing would prevent me from making a report	55.2%
Confidentiality	13.8%
Getting people in trouble	11.5%
Worried about the consequences for safety of child/young person	28.2%
Worried about the consequences for safety of self	16.7%
Fear of losing job	3.4%
Not sure if correct about my suspicions/observations/information from child or others	23.0%
Concerned will not be supported by Manager/Save the Children	6.9%
Other (please specify)	5.7%



Main Findings & Recommendations

Recommendation

- These findings on barriers to reporting have informed our Child Safeguarding training.
- Include activities in the training session to address the barriers and explore them in discussion and through scenarios
- Staff understand they do not need to be “judge and jury” but should follow the reporting process to raise a concern about the safety or wellbeing of a child



Child Protection Policy Review

- Respondent Comments

- *I am more aware of the signs of child abuse and more willing to speak out about them if something comes across me*
- *More informed of CP issues, more aware of what to look for/be concerned about, more passionate about SCA's work, more confident we have good support*

Main Findings & Recommendations

Question 24 – Do you believe children and young people involved in Save the Children programs are aware they can raise a concern or complaint using the Reporting Process?

Number of responses - 174	
Yes	31.0%
No	18.4%
*Not sure	50.6%

Main Findings & Recommendations

Child Protection Reporting Process

Recommendation

- A child/youth friendly version of the CP Reporting Process be developed and displayed in areas and places they access when participating in Save the Children programs.
- Made clear who children can speak to when they have a concern or feel unsafe.





Main Findings & Recommendations

The importance of Training and Capacity Building to shift Policy into everyday practice

- One of the major findings to come from the Survey was the request for ongoing and refresher training workshops in child safeguarding.
- Ongoing training and opportunities to discuss child safeguarding openly allowed staff to deepen their understanding and confidence in the Policy and child safeguarding measures and how to put these into everyday practice.

Main Findings & Recommendations

Question 12 – After the training session how much did you understand of how the Policy and Code of Conduct applies to your role at Save the Children?

Number of responses - 131	
Did not understand at all	0.8%
Some understanding	10.7%
*Good understanding	55.7%
Completely understood	32.8%

Main Findings & Recommendations

Question 14 – For child protection, what is your preferred method of training/learning delivery?

Number of responses - 179	
*Face to face training workshops	80%
Induction session	7.3%
Online training	6.1%
Read through information myself	6.7%
Emails	0.6%

Main Findings & Recommendations

Training and Capacity Building

- It was also clear that in the area of child safeguarding staff prefer face to face learning as they are able to discuss complex and sensitive issues, learn from the facilitators and participants who can share knowledge and experience and work through scenarios with their team.
- Also makes clear the role they play in creating a child safe organisation





Child Protection Policy Review – Respondent Comments

Question – Please list at least one way in which the Child Protection Policy and child safeguarding measures has made a difference to your everyday practice at SCA?

- *It has given me better understanding to learn about children rights and be confident to share the information related to children. Also motivated to communicate to the staff and partner organisations to reduce the risk of child abuse*
- *It has made myself more aware of child protection issues in my community and has empowered myself to try and make a change in my community*
- *CPP helps me to understand the child's point of view and work in the best interest of the child*

Child Protection Policy Review – Respondent Comments

- *It has given me a different approach at the work place and at home, behavioural change, it is very important*



- *The best interest of Children is my number one consideration while I am working with Children. I am now seeing everything I am doing through this lens.*



Thank You

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