



**Child Safe  
Organisations**  
National Principles

**National Principles for  
Child Safe Organisations**

**The child safe journey:  
the role of organisations &  
families in upholding children's  
rights**

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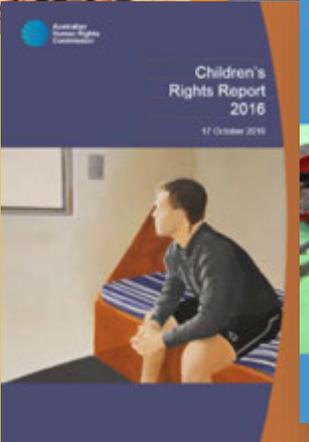
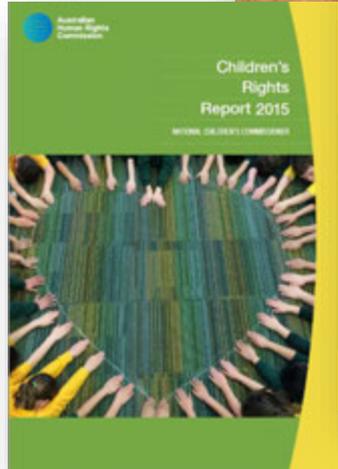
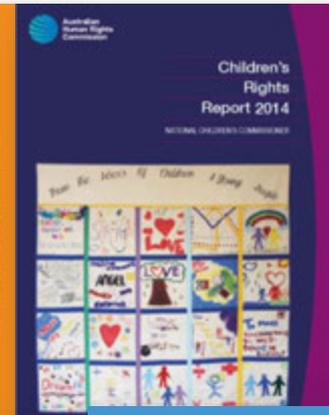


## The role of the National Children's Commissioner



- **to promote discussion and awareness of matters relating to the human rights of children in Australia**
- **to undertake research, or educational or other programs, for the purpose of promoting respect for the human rights of children in Australia, and promoting the enjoyment and exercise of human rights by children in Australia**
- **to examine existing and proposed Commonwealth enactments for the purpose of ascertaining whether they recognise and protect the human rights of children in Australia, and to report to the Minister the results of any such examination**
- **to submit reports to parliament which highlight issues and challenges facing Australian children and young people.**

# Children's Rights Reports



# The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child



# Recommendations from the Royal Commission

- **The establishment of a new National Office for Child Safety in the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, to be transitioned into an Australian Government statutory body within 18 months. It would develop and lead the coordination of the new National Framework, including coordination of the child safe standards (Rec 6.16)**
- **The development of a new National Framework for Child Safety, including a national strategy to prevent child sexual abuse (Rec 6.15)**
- **The national Child Safe Standards developed by the Royal Commission should be adopted as part of the new National Statement of Principles for Child Safe Organisations (Rec 6.7)**



**Organisations can foster wellbeing in children by helping them to:**

- develop positive relationships with peers and adults
- learn about the world around them
- explore things they are interested in
- empower them to have a voice.

# Consultations

## Implementation Advisory Group

- Affinity Intercultural Foundation
- Australia Council for the Arts
- Australian Charities and Not-for-Profits Commission
- Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority
- Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care
- Australian Institute of Company Directors
- Australian Local Government Association
- Australian Medical Association
- Australian Sports Commission
- Early Childhood Australia
- Families Australia
- Insurance Council of Australia
- National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation
- National Council of Churches in Australia
- National Disability Service
- Principals Australia Institute
- Scouts Australia
- SNAICC
- YMCA Australia

## Consumer Advocacy Advisory Group

- Australian Centre for Child Protection
- Australian Childhood Trauma Group
- Australian Multicultural Foundation
- Australian Youth Affairs Coalition
- Children and Young People with Disability Australia
- CREATE
- Headspace
- Healing Foundation
- Institute of Child Protection Studies
- Multicultural Youth Advocacy Network
- National Association for Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect
- National LGBTI Health Alliance
- Our Watch
- Parenting Research Centre
- SNAICC



## What children and young people said they would like organisations to promise them:



- **Treat everyone equally and fairly**
- **Make places happy and comfortable**
- **Be good at what you do**
- **Provide access to technology and care**
- **Understand the needs of individual children and young people**
- **Make sure there are lots of ways for children to have a say**
- **Don't just listen, act.**



## National Principles for Child Safe Organisations

- **create an environment where children's safety and wellbeing is at the centre of thought, values and actions**
- **places emphasis on genuine engagement and valuing of children**
- **creates conditions that reduce the likelihood of harm to children and young people**
- **creates conditions that increase the likelihood of identifying any harm**
- **responds to any concerns, disclosures, allegations or suspicions of harm**
- **provide a consistent national benchmark**
- **reflect Royal Commission's 10 child safe standards**
- **high level to allow for flexibility in implementation across a range of organisations**
- **complement State and Territory based requirements.**





Child Safe  
Organisations

# National Principles for Child Safe Organisations

1

Child safety and wellbeing is embedded in organisational leadership, governance and culture.

6

Processes to respond to complaints and concerns are child focused.

2

Children and young people are informed about their rights, participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously.

7

Staff and volunteers are equipped with the knowledge, skills and awareness to keep children and young people safe through ongoing education and training.

3

Families and communities are informed, and involved in promoting child safety and wellbeing.

8

Physical and online environments promote safety and wellbeing while minimising the opportunity for children and young people to be harmed.

4

Equity is upheld and diverse needs respected in policy and practice.

9

Implementation of the national child safe principles is regularly reviewed and improved.

5

People working with children and young people are suitable and supported to reflect child safety and wellbeing values in practice.

10

Policies and procedures document how the organisation is safe for children and young people.



For information and resources, go to  
<https://childsafe.humanrights.gov.au>



**Principle**

**2**

**Children and young people are informed about their rights, participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously.**



# Article 12:

**Article 12 of the Convention establishes the right of every child to freely express her or his views, in all matters affecting her or him, and the subsequent right for those views to be given due weight, according to the child's age and maturity.**



## Principle

# 2

## Children and young people are informed about their rights, participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously.

This principle describes an organisational culture that supports children and young people to understand what child safety and wellbeing means. They are informed about their rights and responsibilities in an age appropriate way. They contribute and actively participate in building an organisational culture that is safe for them.

Children and young people know about the organisation's commitment to child safety and wellbeing and access relevant information and programs. They recognise safe environments and understand protective strategies. In such environments, children and young people feel comfortable participating in decisions and communicating their views and concerns. Ultimately, however, the responsibility for child safety and wellbeing in an organisation rests with the organisation and its workers.

Staff and volunteers value and respect children and young people's identity and culture, are comfortable and skilled in engaging with them, understand their developmental needs and build on children and young people's strengths and capacities.

### Key action areas

- 2.1 Children and young people are informed about all of their rights, including to safety, information, and participation.
- 2.2 The importance of friendships is recognised and support from peers is encouraged, to help children and young people feel safe and be less isolated.
- 2.3 Where relevant to the setting or context, children may be offered access to sexual abuse prevention programs and to relevant related information in an age appropriate way.
- 2.4 Staff and volunteers are attuned to signs of harm and facilitate child-friendly ways for children to express their views, participate in decision-making and raise their concerns.

### Indicators that this principle is upheld

- The organisation has programs and resources to educate children and young people on their rights including their right to safety and right to be listened to.
- The organisation is proactive in providing age appropriate platforms to regularly seek children and young people's views and encourage participation in decision-making.
- Staff and volunteers have a good understanding of children and young people's developmental needs.
- Opportunities for participating are documented and regularly reviewed.
- The organisational environment is friendly and welcoming for children and young people.
- Children and young people participate in decision-making in the organisation, including in relation to safety issues and risk identification.
- Children and young people can identify trusted adults and friends.
- Children and young people are informed about their roles and responsibilities in helping to ensure the safety and wellbeing of their peers.

## Tools and Resources

- A new **Child Safe Organisations website**
- A **self-assessment tool** which will help organisations consider their current child safe practices and areas for improvement
- A template that organisations can use to develop a **Charter of Commitment to children and young people**
- An example **Code of Conduct** that organisations can adapt
- A template that organisations can use to develop a **Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy** that addresses the ten National Principles
- An **online safety checklist** for organisations we are developing with the Office of the e-Safety Commissioner
- A **guide for parents and carers** to help assess whether an organisation is child-safe.

### Still to come:

- **Online training modules** that will take people through the ten National Principles in an interactive way



**Principle 2: Children and young people are informed about their rights, participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously.**

**3) Children and young people share their views and participate in decision making.**

**What might this look like?**

- Children and young people learn about their rights, including to safety, information, to be listened to and to have their views respected
- Children and young people can recognise safe environments
- Children and young people know how to seek help
- Children and young people have opportunities to give their opinion on what they like and don't like about the organisation, how things could be better, what makes them feel safe and unsafe in the organisation.

- Always
- Most of the time
- Sometimes
- Rarely
- Never
- Other (don't know, unsure)

Comment:

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Next steps:

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By whom:

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By when:

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**4) The organisation values children's views.**

**What might this look like?**

Staff and volunteers in the organisation:

- Listen to what children say
- Understand that children may communicate their views non-verbally, through changes in behaviour or participation
- Consider and reflect children's views to improve their activities and processes e.g. through discussion in team or management meetings
- Provide age appropriate platforms for children and young people to communicate and participate e.g. through games, creative activities and group discussion.

- Always
- Most of the time
- Sometimes
- Rarely
- Never
- Other (don't know, unsure)

Comment:

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Next steps:

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Refer to **National Principle 2** its key action areas and indicators to help you consider future actions.



# Embedding Child Safety in an Organisation

- **Do staff know about children's rights? Do children know their about their rights?**
- **Do children have routine opportunities to have their voice heard?**
- **How welcome and included do Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families feel and those from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse backgrounds?**
- **What steps is the organisation taking to support parents and carers in feeling comfortable and informed when asking questions about their child's safety and wellbeing?**
- **Are parents and carers aware of the complaints processes in organisations?**
- **Do organisations seek feedback from parents/carers?**

# A Whole of Organisation Approach



# Thank you

Visit our project page at  
[www.humanrights.gov.au/child-safe](http://www.humanrights.gov.au/child-safe)

Email:  
[childsafe@humanrights.gov.au](mailto:childsafe@humanrights.gov.au)



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