



# Sunny Faces Early Learning Centre

## Child Protection

It is every child's right to be safe and protected from all forms of abuse, neglect, violence or exploitation. It is the legal and moral obligation of every adult who works with children to ensure their safety and wellbeing. This duty of care is held by all those involved in child care including owners, sponsors, management, licensees, casual and permanent child care professionals, students and volunteers.

Staff will report to the Director or Sunny Faces Early Learning Management representative immediately if they have a concern regarding a child's wellbeing.

Sunny Faces Early Learning empowers and supports staff members with their concerns for children. Should a staff member become concerned they are supported to document and report the concern to ensure the safety and wellbeing of every child.

We ask staff in the centre to at all times consider these important guidelines outlined:

- be alert to any warning signs that a child is displaying
- observe the child and make written notes as soon as you begin to have concerns - pay attention to changes in their behaviour, ideas, feelings and the words they use
- have gentle, non-judgemental discussions with the child - expressing your concern that a child looks sad or unwell can result in disclosures
- do not pressure the child to respond and do not ask questions that put words into a child's mouth
- assure the child that they can come and talk to you when they need to, and listen to them when they do
- when a child is being abused it does not go away and usually becomes more serious over time

Documentation will be kept regarding all incidents and/ or concerns. The documents will include a time frame for any significant behavioural changes, descriptions of any suspect marks; any child initiated verbal information and other relevant information.

Should a staff member request that the Director make a report to the relevant authority the staff member will not disclose any of their concerns to anyone other than the Director or Sunny Faces Early Learning Management to ensure privacy and confidentiality.

The Director will use all documentation to decide whether there are genuine grounds for concern. If the Director agrees that the concern needs to be reported they will contact the relevant authority who will further handle the investigation. Once the decision is made that there are grounds for concern we are legally required to report the matter as we are mandatory reporters.

The following factors are considered when deciding on whether to contact the relevant authority:

- History or previous harm to the child
- Social or geographic isolation of the child or family
- Abuse or neglect of a sibling
- Family history of violence
- Domestic violence
- Physical or mental health issues for the parent or caregiver

### Source:

- ★ Education and Care Services National Regulations
- ★ QLD- Child Protection Act 1999
- ★ NSW- Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998





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- Difficulties in a child's behaviour
- Whether there are unrealistic expectations of the child
- A developmental disability of the caregiver

General indicators for staff and families to be aware of as signs of possible harm include:

- showing wariness and distrust of adults
- excessive rocking, sucking and biting
- difficulty sleeping, often being tired and falling asleep
- inconsistent explanation for injuries
- low self esteem
- difficulty relating to adults and peers
- aggressive or demanding behaviour
- abusing alcohol or drugs
- bedwetting or soiling
- being seemingly accident prone
- suicidal feelings or attempts at suicide
- difficulty concentrating
- being withdrawn or overly obedient
- reluctance to go home
- creating stories, poems or artwork about abuse.

If any parent/ legal guardian, family or community member is concerned about a child please speak with a member of staff so any concerns can be addressed.

Source:

- ★ Education and Care Services National Regulations
- ★ QLD- Child Protection Act 1999
- ★ NSW- Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998

