

Child protection curriculum

“Children learn as they play. Most importantly, in play children learn how to learn.”

O. Fred Donaldson

It is a fundamental principle in Australian society that parents have the responsibility to protect their children and keep them safe.

Australia supports a United Nations agreement that children are to be protected from all forms of abuse, exploitation and violence. Abuse may be sexual, physical and emotional. Australia has laws to prevent and respond to the abuse or neglect of children.

In South Australia this law is called the *Children's Protection Act*. Under this Act people who work and volunteer in schools, preschools and care settings are called mandated notifiers. This means that they must report child abuse or neglect if they have reasonable belief that a child is being harmed. All people employed in the Department of Education and Children's Development receive regular training in this responsibility. When people report child abuse it is a confidential exchange of information with the Department of Families and Communities.

Schools, Preschools and Child-Care Centres have the responsibility to protect children and keep them safe when they are under their care. Schools and Centres work with parents and other agencies to keep children safe. Some of the ways they contribute to children's safety are through:

- screening the people who want to work with children and young people
- providing staff and volunteers with expected standards of behaviour towards children and young people
- providing supervision of children in the class, in the yard, and on school excursions and camps

- implementing the school policies to ensure that children are treated in a just way and to respond to racial, sexual, verbal and physical harassment
- educating about living safely and being healthy in Australia. This includes road safety, water safety, sun protection, hygiene and healthy eating
- providing education about the dangers of drugs and alcohol
- involving students in making decisions about their school and class
- teaching children how to develop positive relationships and providing opportunities to build self esteem
- teaching the Child Protection Curriculum.

The Child Protection curriculum teaches all children from a young age, in an age appropriate way, to

- recognise abuse and tell a trusted adult about it
- understand what is appropriate and inappropriate touching
- understand ways of keeping themselves safe.
- A range of books, videos and classroom strategies are used in the curriculum.
- Some strategies used with students are:
 - *networks*: a list of 4 or 5 trusted adults that the student can seek help from
 - *one-step removed*: students are given 'What if...'
scenarios eg 'What if someone went home after school and found that he or she had lost their key and nobody was home?' These situations are discussed and a number of strategies that might help to keep the children safe are developed

- *persistence expectation*: students are taught to continue to tell people or take action until they are safe
- *protective interrupting*: teachers interrupt a student to prevent a disclosure in a group that may lead to further feelings of being unsafe - discussion time with these students is arranged in privacy after the lesson.

The Child Protection Curriculum is embedded into the Kindergarten program and is also a focus on the Wednesday session. The upcoming program can be found on the program wall. Parents/caregivers are encouraged to talk to their children and the teachers about the Child Protection program.

Educators have training to teach the Child Protection curriculum.