

Statement of Commitment to Child Safety

The Playgroup NSW vision is to positively impact every child, their family and community, in the first 2,000 days of life. We have a strong focus on child safety and wellbeing that is informed by the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations (the National Principles). Playgroup NSW recognises the first 5 years of a child's life as a pivotal time for healthy brain development, and that we have a responsibility to ensure that we identify and respond to challenges and vulnerabilities as early as possible to allow children to reach their potential. A Playgroup NSW value states that we will Be child centric – That children are at the heart of our work. The wellbeing of the child is at the centre of our deliberation and decision-making across the organisation.

An essential part of our vision involves Playgroup NSW being committed to the safety, wellbeing, and empowerment of all children accessing Playgroup NSW programs and services, including but not limited to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, those from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds and children with disability.

Playgroup NSW regards its child protection responsibilities as a critical element of all processes, programs and services, and as such is committed to protecting all children from abuse and harm. Playgroups NSW has zero tolerance for any form of child abuse or harm. Playgroup NSW is committed to ensuring compliance with all relevant child protection laws and regulations and to maintain safe and supportive physical and online environments for all children.

NATIONAL PRINCIPLES FOR A CHILD SAFE ORGANISATION

Playgroup NSW has adopted the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations (Australian Human Rights Commission, 2018) and ensures that they are embedded in Playgroup NSW policy frameworks.

Playgroup NSW is dedicated to promoting and adhering to requirements of the National Principles by:

- Creating conditions to reduce the likelihood of children being harmed;
- Creating conditions that increase the likelihood of identifying and reporting harm;
- Responding appropriately to disclosures, allegations and suspicions of harm.

Playgroup NSW ensures that its policies, procedures and practices reflect the actions and intentions of the National Principles.

PLAYGROUP NSW STATEMENT OF COMMITMENT TO CHILD SAFETY OBJECTIVES

This Statement provides the framework for:

- The development, maintenance and adherence to work systems, practices, policies and procedures that promote child protection, safety and wellbeing within all Playgroup NSW programs, services and activities;
- The creation of a safe and supportive environment and a positive and robust child protection culture;
- The promotion and open discussion of child protection issues within the organisation; and
- Complying with all laws, regulations and standards relevant to child protection in NSW and Australia.

PLAYGROUP NSW - CHILD SAFE VALUES & PRINCIPLES

Playgroup NSW has developed the following values and principles that will guide the commitment to child safety and form the basis for all child protection policies and procedures within the organisation.

1. All children have the right to be safe;
2. Children's safety and protection is everyone's responsibility;
3. The welfare and best interests of the child are paramount;
4. Children's privacy is respected;
5. Clear expectations for appropriate behaviour with children are established in employee and volunteer Code of Conduct policies and procedures;
6. Child safety awareness is promoted and openly discussed within all Playgroup NSW communities;
7. Procedures are in place to screen all employees, volunteers, Third Party contractors and other external stakeholders who have direct contact with children;
8. Working with Children Checks and relevant training are a requirement for all Board members and employees
9. Procedures for responding to alleged or suspected incidents of child abuse and harm are simple and accessible for all members of the Playgroup NSW communities;
10. Children's voices, views and opinions are listened to with respect and taken seriously.

CHILD PROTECTION ADVOCATES (formerly known as Child Protection Officers)

As part of our commitment to child safety and protection, Playgroup NSW has designated Child Protection Advocates who are experienced and knowledgeable and confident in managing sensitive issues relating to child protection and safety. The General Manager Programs and Quality and the Community Leader Aboriginal Programs are the current Child Protection Advocates.

Our Child Protection Advocates are available to answer any questions regarding the Playgroup NSW Statement of Commitment to Child Safety, the Playgroup NSW Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy and any specific questions related to keeping all child safe from harm.

For further information, please contact: Mel Hill, General Manager Programs and Quality: mhill@playgroupnsw.org.au.

National Principles for a Child Safe Organisation

Playgroup NSW has adopted the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations (Australian Human Rights Commission, 2018) and ensures that they are embedded in Playgroup NSW policy frameworks:



STANDARD 1

Child safety is embedded in organisational leadership governance and culture



STANDARD 2
children participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously



STANDARD 3
Families and communities are informed and involved



STANDARD 4
Equity is upheld and diverse needs are taken into account



STANDARD 5

People working with children are suitable and supported



STANDARD 7

Staff are equipped with the knowledge, skills and awareness to keep children safe through continual education and training



STANDARD 6

Processes to respond to complaints of child abuse are child focused



STANDARD 8
Physical and online environments minimise the opportunity for abuse to occur



STANDARD 9
Implementation of the Child Safe Standards is continuously reviewed and improved



STANDARD 10
Policies and procedures document how the organisation is child safe