



STEP 1: Understand Child Abuse

Understanding child abuse is the first step in building a child safe organisation. To protect children in your care you need to know the potential risks and indicators of child abuse. It is only with this knowledge and understanding that you can develop effective child protection policies and child abuse prevention practices.

Child abuse includes physical, emotional and sexual abuse. Staff and volunteers need to have an understanding of all these forms. They need to learn about the nature of child abuse, and develop an awareness of how and why some children are victimised. By understanding the activities, relationships, inadequate procedures and environmental factors that potentially put children at risk, your organisation can act against them. It is important that all participants know what are appropriate and inappropriate behaviours in relationships with children. This will enable staff and volunteers to recognise dangerous situations and act before children are abused.

Your staff and volunteers also need to be aware of the indicators of possible child abuse and how to react, so they can respond appropriately to suspected abuse.

Child abuse can only be prevented when the causes and indicators of the problem are understood.