



Child safe environments

Information for parents and caregivers

When choosing a service, activity or program for children or young people there are questions you can ask that will help you to decide if the service can offer a safe and positive environment for your child or young person.

Legislative obligations for organisations

Organisations that provide services or activities to children and young people are required to ensure that they provide child safe environments.

To establish a safe environment for children and young people, organisations must:

- develop policies and procedures to ensure they provide child safe environments
- meet working with children check requirements for people working with children or undertaking child-related work
- lodge a Child safe environments compliance statement.

All persons or bodies who provide a service or undertake an activity that constitutes child-related work under the *Child Safety (Prohibited Persons) Act 2016*, must meet these obligations. This includes organisations providing:

- accommodation and residential services for children
- services or activities provided by religious organisations (which includes organisations providing spiritual or pastoral services)
- childcare or child-minding services
- child protection services
- services or activities provided in the course of the operation of clubs and associations providing sporting, recreational, cultural or artistic services with a significant membership of, or involvement by, children
- coaching or tuition services for children
- commercial services provided directly to children, including recreational, party, entertainment services, costumed characters, photographers and talent shows and beauty pageants
- disability services for children

- education services for children (including preschool, primary and secondary education, but not tertiary education)
- health services for children (including allied health services)
- justice and detention services for children
- transport services for children
- other non-government organisations that provide welfare or cultural services wholly or partly for children.

An organisation may consist of a single person (ie a sole trader) or a partnership.

Child safe environments

Establishing child safe environments policies and procedure encourages organisations to consider the safety and well-being of children and young people who are accessing their services and to implement strategies to minimise any risk of harm to children and young people.

It also encourages organisations to build an environment which is both child safe and child friendly, where children feel respected, valued and encouraged to reach their full potential.

A working with children check assesses whether a person could pose a risk to the safety of children, based on criminal history and child protection information.

The working with children check can only be conducted by the Department of Human Services Screening Unit. For more information visit, <https://screening.sa.gov.au>.

Lodging a Child safe environments compliance statement allows organisations to assess whether their current policies and procedures meet the minimum requirements and advise the department of this.



How to tell if a service is providing child safe environments

You could ask to see:

- a child safe environments policy
- codes of conduct for adults and children
- information about recruitment processes for staff and volunteers
- reporting procedures for complaints or grievances.

Ask other parents and children how they feel about the service, program or activity.

Teach your child about feeling safe and what they can do if they don't feel safe or comfortable.

Most importantly, ask your child what they think and observe their behaviour before, during and after attending the service, program or activity.

Raising concerns

If you are not satisfied that the organisation provides a safe environment for your child, take a proactive approach. You can:

- speak to the person providing the service
- speak to someone in a management role about any issues that may be impacting on the organisation's ability to provide a safe and positive environment for children and young people.

If you suspect a child or young person is, or may be at risk contact the Child Abuse Report Line (CARL) on 13 14 78.

Further information

Information about Child safe environments is available from, <https://dhs.sa.gov.au/>.

If you can't find what you need online, contact Child safe environments:

Email: DHS.childsafe@sa.gov.au

Phone: 08 8463 6468

Checklist

- Has the organisation provided you with a copy of its child safe environments policies and procedures?
- Does the organisation have a code of conduct?
- Does the organisation encourage children and parents/caregivers to be involved in decision making?
- Is your child happy when engaging with the organisation?
- Does the organisation welcome parents and caregivers at any time and encourage them to be involved?
- Does the organisation have clear staff and volunteer recruitment procedures, including staff screening and working with children checks (where required)?
- Do you and your child know who to speak to if you have any concerns about the services you receive?