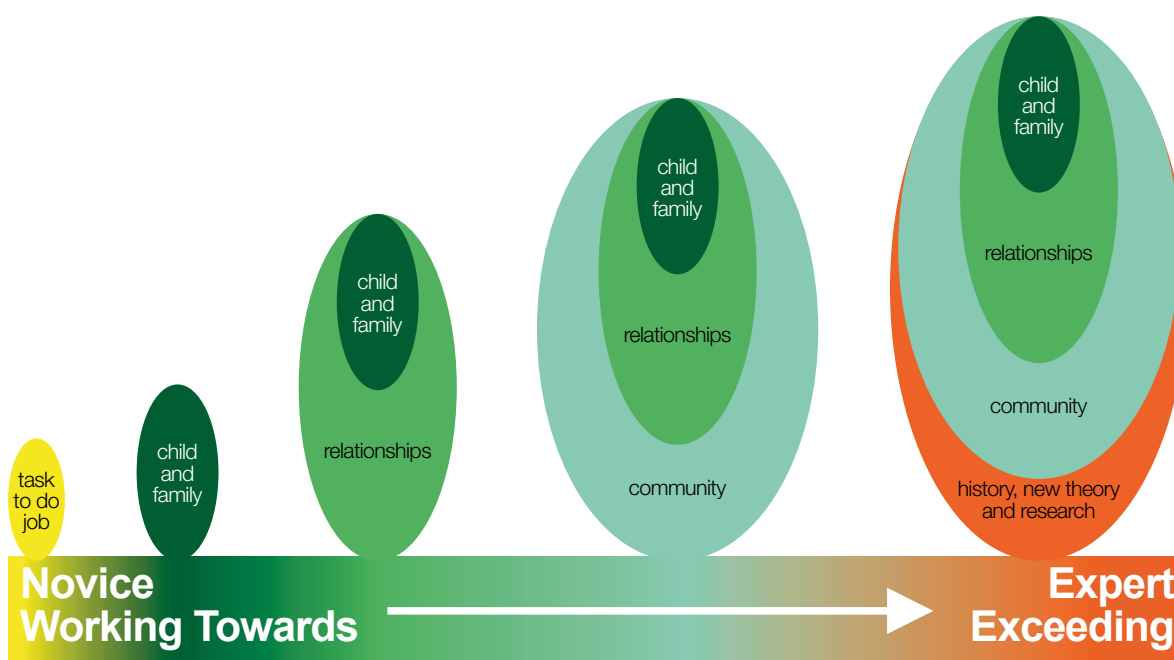


Child Protection

2.3.4

<i>Regs</i>	NQS	EYLF
84 Awareness of child protection law 168(2)(h) Policies and procedures are required in relation to providing a child safe environment 273 Course in child protection (NSW only)	2.3.4 Educators, co-ordinators and staff members are aware of their roles and responsibilities to respond to every child at risk of abuse or neglect.	Responsiveness to children Partnerships with families



task to do job

What is Child Abuse, Maltreatment and Neglect?

Child maltreatment refers to any non-accidental behaviour by parents, caregivers, other adults or older adolescents that is outside the norms of conduct and entails a substantial risk of causing physical or emotional harm to a child or young person. Such behaviours may be intentional or unintentional and can include acts of omission (ie neglect) and commission (i.e. abuse) (Bromfield 2005; Christoffel et al. 1992). The terms “child abuse and neglect” and “child maltreatment” are used interchangeably. Child maltreatment is commonly divided into five main subtypes:

- physical abuse
- emotional maltreatment
- neglect
- sexual abuse
- the witnessing of family violence.

Each State and Territory in Australia has its own child protection laws. Regulation 84 requires that you are familiar with the law in your State and Territory and understand your obligations.

In most States and Territories, it is compulsory for educators or staff at children’s services to report suspected cases of abuse or neglect if there are reasonable grounds for having the suspicion. The educators or staff member is called a “mandatory reporter.” Even where educators or staff may not be mandated reporters under child protection legislation, they have an obligation under the ECEC laws to act in the best interests of the child. You should always report suspected cases of abuse/neglect.

We must always comply with the child protection legislation and our service child protection policy.

task
to do
job

Task 1

Acts of reportable conduct can occur in our society within all cultural, occupational and socio-economic groups.

Yes	No	Are you a mandatory reporter of child abuse/neglect under your State Child Protection laws?
Yes	No	Do you need to prove that reportable conduct is occurring before reporting it?
Yes	No	Do you need evidence of who may be abusing a child before making a report?
Yes	No	Are individuals or groups of children permitted to be in areas where they are not visible to other staff members, or taken into rooms that can be locked?
Yes	No	Are students and volunteers left unsupervised or alone with children?
Yes	No	Is it best practice to have at least two adults present while there is a child on the premises of a centre?

child
and
family

It is important for educators and staff to be sensitive to the practices of families of culturally diverse or indigenous backgrounds. The processes and procedures within this policy attempt to allow for the individual differences of families.

It is also important to keep up-to-date records on all children. For example, educators should record relevant conversations with parents that may explain a child's behaviour change (eg parents separating, new baby in the family, moving house). Educators should also work with parents to develop and record appropriate procedures for managing toilet practices and behaviour management.

child
and
family

When you have secure, trusting and respectful relationships with children, and when you develop partnerships with families, you will find it easier to pick up on indicators of possible abuse and neglect. There will also be more opportunities for a child to make a disclosure of abuse or neglect to you. You may pick this up through the daily conversations you have with the child. Similarly, families may say things like "I think I saw...", "Somebody told me that...", "Just think you should now..."

relationships

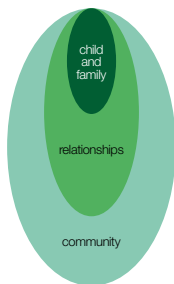
Task 2

Which of the following actions or behaviours could be indicators of child abuse or neglect? Tick all relevant boxes.

Tip: Read your service's Child Protection Policy or google "indicators of child abuse or neglect" for assistance in answering this question.

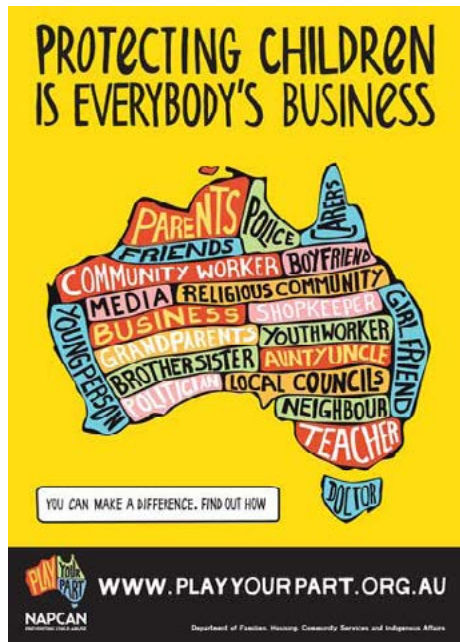
(Please place a tick next to the indicators)

- Bruises, burns, sprains, cuts, fractures
- Marked delay between injury and getting medical assistance
- Child talking about going to the doctors
- Extreme attention-seeking or risk taking behaviour
- Child wanting to climb the tree in the play area
- Behavioural disorders such as disruptiveness, aggressiveness, bullying
- Having a fight with best friend
- Compulsive lying and stealing
- Destructive or violent behaviour
- Rocking the body or sucking things
- Boys playing with dolls
- Being very withdrawn or depressed
- Delays in physical, mental and emotional development
- High levels of excitement
- Frequent hunger
- Child asking for a second serve of morning tea
- Seeming constantly tired or lacking life or energy
- Low self-esteem
- Child coming to care with their hair not brushed
- Looking generally run-down and sickly
- Significant changes in mood or behaviour



Protecting children is everybody’s business

As a community, we are all responsible for ensuring the safety and wellbeing of the children in that community. The National Association for the Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect (NAPCAN) is an organisation which has been developing and promoting prevention strategies and programs since 1987. It has numerous resources available on-line at <http://napcan.org.au/> including posters and brochures.



“Last year over 35,000 children were proven to have been abused or neglected.” NAPCAN

Task 3

Actions

Yes	No	N/A	Does the policy clearly state what a reportable allegation is, or how to determine what is reportable?
Yes	No	N/A	Does the policy outline what to do if concerns are raised about a child's welfare but they don't meet the mandatory reporting threshold?
Yes	No	N/A	Does the policy clearly outline some of the indicators of abuse?
Yes	No	N/A	Does the policy require all educators, staff and volunteers to have child protection training, including in the recognition and reporting of child abuse and neglect?
Yes	No	N/A	Is the policy made available to families so they have information about service child protection practices?

Legislative requirements

Yes	No	N/A	Does the policy outline who in the service is required to report to the State and Territory Authorities under the State or Territory legislation?
Yes	No	N/A	Does the policy require all employees (other than those who may legally be exempted) to have child protection clearances?

Roles and responsibilities

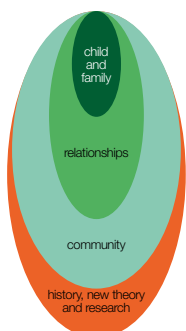
Yes	No	N/A	Does the policy make a clear statement about the roles and responsibilities of those involved in the protection of children?
Yes	No	N/A	Does the service have a procedure which describes the process the service will follow in investigating an allegation?
Yes	No	N/A	Does the policy discuss how allegations of child abuse/neglect against employees at the service will be handled?

Documentation

Yes	No	N/A	Does the policy contain a clear statement about the confidential nature of all documents relating to allegations against employees of the service?
Yes	No	N/A	Does the policy outline that all notifications of abuse, including those made against employees, will be treated confidentially?
Yes	No	N/A	Are educators/staff required to sign a written acknowledgement that they have read, understood and are prepared to abide by the child protection policy? (Template with this week's tasks).
Yes	No	N/A	Does the policy state that all reportable allegations or convictions against an employee will be notified to the State or Territory Authority?

Review

Yes	No	N/A	Is the policy dated and a date set for review?
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The Australian Government provides an overview of child protection legislation around Australia online through the Australian Institute for Family Studies.

<http://www.aifs.gov.au/cfca/pubs/factsheets/a145620/index.html>

This Fact Sheet also discusses the guiding principles in all State and Territories' child protection laws:

1. A best interest principle – actions are taken in the child's best interests Early intervention – to prevent entry/re-entry to the statutory system
2. Participation of children in decision-making
3. Out of Home Care – final option
4. Culturally specific responses to Indigenous Australians – focus on maintaining child's identity and community connectedness Bromfield and Holzer (2008)

A list of Regulatory Authorities accompanies this week's tasks.

Task 4

Create a child protection poster with all the requirements for your state or territory.

Get everybody to sign the poster ONLY WHEN they are confident they can meet Reg 84 ie understand their obligations under that Law.

