



INFORMATION SHEET 6



Are you concerned about a child's safety and wellbeing?

INFORMATION FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION AND CARE PROFESSIONALS

Frequently asked questions

Q: If I see or hear something about a child at work that concerns me, what should I do? Do I have to immediately contact Child Safety's Regional Intake Service?

- A: Depending on how serious the behaviour or signs are, you can:
1. continue to observe the child for further signs or information first, before deciding whether to make a report
 2. have a discussion with the parent or caregiver about the behaviour and your concerns, when you feel it is safe to do so
 3. contact Family and Child Connect to discuss your observations and concerns, and decide if you should refer the family for help and support (with their consent) or if you need to report your concerns to a Regional Intake Service.
 4. contact your local Regional Intake Service to report your concerns and seek advice on the next steps.

Q: Where can I find information about whether or not to report to Child Safety?

- A: To help you decide if you should make a report to Child Safety, you can:
1. use the Queensland Child Protection Guide which is found on Child Safety's website

www.communities.qld.gov.au/childsafety/protecting-children/reporting-child-abuse

2. call Family and Child Connect on **13FAMILY** or **13 32 64** to discuss your concerns.

Q: Can I discuss my concerns about a child with anyone before deciding whether to make a report to Child Safety?

- A: Yes. *The Child Protection Act 1999* allows you to discuss your concerns and confer with your colleagues before making a report.

Q: Can I refer a child or family directly to Family and Child Connect for help without discussing this with them first?

- A: No. You must obtain the family's consent before you can refer them to Family and Child Connect for help and support.

Q: If I call Child Safety's Regional Intake Service to report my concerns, is my identity protected? Will the parents or caregivers be told who provided the information?

- A: Your identity is protected as a notifier. Under section 186 of the *Child Protection Act 1999* your identity will not be revealed to any person.

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Q: Do I need to tell the child or family that I have made a report to Child Safety?

A: No, you do not need to tell the child or family about your report to Child Safety.

Q: Do I need to make a verbal or written report to Child Safety about my concerns?

A: Either way is acceptable. You can report your concerns to Child Safety by completing an online written report. Go to www.communities.qld.gov.au/childsafety and look for the Quick Link 'Reporting child abuse'.

You can also call the Regional Intake Service closest to your care centre, or the Child Safety After-Hours Service Centre before 9 am or after 5 pm, or on the weekend. You will find the telephone numbers on the Child Safety website www.communities.qld.gov.au/childsafety/about-us/contact-us

Q: What if I am concerned about sending the child home with their parent or caregiver?

A: If you have serious concerns for the child's immediate safety, you need to contact the Queensland Police Service who are an emergency response service. Child Safety should also be contacted as soon as possible. You cannot refuse to allow a parent or caregiver to leave with their child.

Q: I have concerns about a child, but it is 6 pm. Who should I call?

A: If you have concerns and you believe an immediate or urgent response is required, but it is outside normal working hours (Monday to Friday, 9 am–5 pm), you can call the Child Safety After Hours Service Centre on **1800 177 135** or **3235 9999**.

Q: What happens to my information once I have reported my concerns to a Regional Intake Service?

A: When you report your concerns, Child Safety will determine how to respond to the situation. The safety, wellbeing and best interests of the child are paramount in any decision that is made. Depending on the information you provide, and taking into account any other information that may already be known about the family, Child Safety will either:

1. record a Child Concern Report if the child protection concerns do not reach the threshold for a notification. At this point, the family can be referred by the Child Safety Officer to Family and Child Connect for help and support (consent is not required for Child Safety to refer families to Family and Child Connect).
2. record a child protection notification if the concerns suggest that a child has been harmed, or is at risk of harm and does not have a parent willing and able to protect the child from harm. Child Safety will visit the family and complete an assessment of the child's safety, wellbeing and best interests.

Q: Will I be informed of the outcome or decision made about the child as a result of my report?

A: Child Safety must, where requested, inform notifiers from government and non-government agencies of the department's response to the child protection concerns received.