

1. *What is the National Statement of Principles for Child Safe Organisations?*

The National Statement of Principles (National Principles) sets out 10 principles and related guidance on how to build child safe organisations.

Community Services Ministers in Commonwealth, state and territory jurisdictions have endorsed these draft principles for broad sector consultation throughout Australia in 2017-2018. The aim is to develop a set of nationally agreed principles to which organisations across all sectors will adhere to when working with children and young people to ensure they are kept safe and well.

The principles will help all organisations that provide services to children and young people – whether large or small – to foster a culture of child safety.

The National Principles are:

- A commitment under the [National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children Third Action Plan \(2015-2018\)](#) which is a joint commitment by the Commonwealth, state and territory governments and the non-government services sector
- Underpinned by a child rights, strengths-based approach
- Designed to allow for flexibility in implementation
- Aligned with existing child safe approaches and national, state and territory regulations.

The project involves developing information, guidance and resources to help organisations implement these principles and improve child safety and wellbeing.

2. *What is a child safe organisation?*

A child safe organisation puts children's best interests first.

Children gain great benefits from being involved in organisations of various kinds – such as their local sports club, art or cultural centres, their school, or youth centre. Organisations help children to meet friends, learn new skills and be active participants in their community. The vast majority of organisations, workers and volunteers are motivated to do what is best for children and young people. Many organisations are already working to ensure child safety and wellbeing, for example by having a child safe policy or screening workers for suitability to work with children.

A child safe organisation consciously and systematically:

- creates an environment where children's safety and wellbeing is the centre of thought, values and actions
- places emphasis on genuine engagement with and valuing of children
- creates conditions that reduce the likelihood of harm to children and young people
- creates conditions that increase the likelihood of identifying any harm
- responds to any concerns, disclosures, allegations or suspicions of harm.

3. *How do I know an organisation is safe for my child/ren?*

Many organisations are already taking important steps to ensure child safety and wellbeing such as assessing and screening employees and volunteers for suitability to work with children, and meeting the child safe requirements of the Commonwealth, state and territory governments.

A child's family and community members are an important part of their protective network. They should feel empowered and comfortable speaking to organisations about what policies and practices are in place to keep children safe or to raise concerns if they arise.

Information about what is in place to keep children safe, and how to get involved in refining this information should be readily available. There are a number of resources that can assist parents and community groups learn about child safe organisations. See the links on the Child Safe Organisations project page www.humanrights.gov.au/child-safe for each Children's Commissioners and Guardians websites for state and territory child safe approaches and regulations.

4. *What are child rights?*

Children as well as adults have human rights. Children also have the right to special protection because of their vulnerability to exploitation and abuse.

The main international human rights treaty on children's rights is the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC). The CRC is the most widely ratified human rights treaty in the world. Australia ratified the CRC in December 1990, which means that Australia has a duty to ensure that all children in Australia enjoy the rights set out in the treaty.

The CRC incorporates the whole spectrum of the inter-connected human rights of children - civil, political, economic, social and cultural - and is underpinned by four general principles: children's right to survival and development; children's right to enjoy their rights without discrimination; respect for the best interests of the child as a primary consideration; and children's right to be heard and participate in decisions that affect them.

<https://www.humanrights.gov.au/our-work/childrens-rights/about-childrens-rights>

5. *What is meant by children's rights; what about their responsibilities? What about parents' rights?*

Children's rights are things that every child should have or be able to do like being safe, having a name and getting an education. All rights are connected to each other, and all are equally important. As children grow, they have greater responsibility for the choices they make. A very important right for children is the right to have a say.

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Families and Communities

Having a say does not necessarily mean getting your way. This right is both empowering and safeguarding for children, because they are able to speak up if something is worrying them.

Article 5 of the CRC is clear that parents and carers have the primary role in guiding and raising their children. It also says governments should support parents and carers in this role.

6. *What do the National Principles have to do with the Royal Commission into institutional responses to child sexual abuse?*

In 2013 the Australian Government authorised a [Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse](#) in response to community concern about widespread reports of cases where Australian institutions failed to protect children from sexual abuse. The work of this Commission has emphasised that members of the public, children and young people, parents, carers, families and communities should be confident that organisations working with children provide safe environments where children's rights, needs and interests are met.

The National Statement of Principles for Child Safe Organisations draws on the work of the Royal Commission to build child safe cultures in all organisational settings. The National Principles go further by covering all forms of potential harms to children and also focus on child wellbeing.

7. *How do I become involved or learn more about Child Safe Organisations?*

Please visit www.humanrights.gov.au/child-safe for more information on Child Safe Organisations. You can sign up to be involved through the website.