

Keeping Children Safe from Abuse in Early Childhood Education

An early childhood education and service that safeguards children well will show the following 10 characteristics:

1. Children are listened to.
2. Parents, caregivers and grandparents are welcomed to drop in anytime and make spontaneous or unannounced visits to see their children.
3. A child protection programme is provided as part of the curriculum including teaching children about safe and unsafe touching, the names of body parts, how to say “no”, to tell a trusted adult as soon as possible, and about why some secrets are not good secrets to keep.
4. All adults working at the service and responsible for the service are respectful to children as well as each other.
5. All adults working at the service are open about discussing good and poor practice.
6. All adults working at the service model the appropriate behaviour, including safe touching (e.g. display of affection and empathy when a child has tripped over and hurt his knee).
7. Teachers and managers/supervisors are knowledgeable about the vulnerability of children whom they look after and aware that it is not possible to know that an abuser is not already involved in the service.
8. All staff and others who assist at the service (including students on teaching practice) are supported to ask questions and challenge poor practice.
9. Parents are encouraged to be involved in their children’s care and participate in the activities and life of the setting.
10. Whistle blowing is permitted and all adults working at the service and parents/families using the service know how to use the whistle blowing procedures.

** This checklist is based on knowledge of the NZ context of ECE provision and has drawn on particular recommendations arising from a review of the research literature conducted by Barry Raynes, Jim Wild and Caroline Thompson as part of the Serious Case Review into abuse at Little Ted’s Nursery by the Plymouth Safeguard Children Board.*