



# Child Protection Manual

Resources to help make your organization *child safe*

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This manual is a resource to be used by organizations when developing and implementing child protection policies and procedures

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# Quick Information Guide

## What Are Child Rights?

Protections given to children to ensure a happy and healthy development without fear of harm or exploitation

Rights that all children are born with

Rights that are not based on gender, religion, ethnicity, class, age, race, or other factors

## What Is Child Protection?

Policies, standards, guidelines, and procedures to protect children from both intentional and unintentional harm

## Why Is Child Protection Important for Your Organization?

Prevent incidents between staff and children and between children

Prevent legal issues that may emerge from inappropriate staff behavior

Show donors your commitment to keeping children safe

Gain satisfaction from doing all that you can to protect vulnerable children

## What Should a Staff Behavior Code of Conduct Include?

Guidelines for appropriate staff behavior and examples of inappropriate staff behavior

Positive disciplinary procedures and unacceptable disciplinary measures

## What Should a Child Protection Policy Include?

Recognition of the rights of children

Procedures on staff recruitment and training

Procedures for reporting child abuse within your organization

Guidelines on the use of photos and stories of children

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## An Introduction to Child Rights

Child rights, like human rights, come from the idea that all people have fundamental rights that they are born with. These rights cannot be taken away because of a person's gender, age, religion, race, ethnicity, or other factors. It is recognized that special protection must be given to children to ensure full, happy, and healthy development without fear of harm or exploitation.

There are a number of international treaties that deal with child rights, the most important of which is the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989). It is the most widely ratified human rights treaty (all but two countries have ratified it) and one of the most quickly ratified. The Convention on the Rights of the Child covers civil rights, family, health, welfare, education, leisure, and culture. It is a comprehensive set of goals developed to promote and protect the lives of children.

However, governments are not the only protectors of these rights—organizations, businesses, and individuals should all work to ensure that these rights are upheld for all children.

Reading the Convention on the Rights of the Child will give your organization a sense of what basic rights you already work to uphold. It may also give you ideas about what direction to go in the future. There are many different ways to approach these rights, and it takes different solutions and different kinds of players to successfully achieve them.

### International Treaties Concerning Child Rights

- 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights
- 1965 Hague Convention on Jurisdiction, Applicable Law and Recognition of Decrees Relating to Adoptions
- 1966 International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
- 1966 International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
- 1967 European Convention on Recognition and Enforcement of Decisions Concerning Custody of Children and on Restoration of Custody of Children
- 1969 American Convention on Human Rights
- 1973 Minimum Age Convention
- 1979 Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
- 1980 The European Convention Concerning the Custody of Children
- 1980 Hague Convention on the Civil Aspects of International Child Abduction
- 1989 UN Convention on the Rights of the Child
- 1990 African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child
- 1996 European Convention on the Exercise of Children's Rights
- 1999 Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention

Source: Zeldin, Wendy. "Children's Rights: International Laws." Law Library of Congress, July 2007. <http://www.loc.gov/law/help/child-rights/international-law.php>.

# A SIMPLIFIED VERSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD.



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- Article 1** Everyone under 18 years of age has all the rights in this Convention.
- Article 2** The Convention applies to everyone whatever their race, religion, abilities, whatever they think or say, whatever type of family they come from.
- Article 3** All organisations concerned with children should work towards what is best for each child.
- Article 4** Governments should make these rights available to children.
- Article 5** Governments should respect the rights and responsibilities of families to guide their children so that, as they grow up, they learn to use their rights properly.
- Article 6** Children have the right to live a full life. Governments should ensure that children survive and develop healthily.
- Article 7** Children have the right to a legally registered name and nationality. Children also have the right to know their parents and, as far as possible, to be cared for by them.
- Article 8** Governments should respect a child's right to a name, a nationality and family ties.
- Article 9** Children should not be separated from their parents unless it is for their own good. For example, if a parent is mistreating or neglecting a child. Children whose parents have separated have the right to stay in contact with both parents, unless this might harm the child.
- Article 10** Families who live in different countries should be allowed to move between those countries so that parents and children can stay in contact, or get back together as a family.
- Article 11** Governments should take steps to stop children being taken out of their own country illegally.
- Article 12** Children have the right to say what they think should happen when adults are making decisions that affect them and to have their opinions taken into account.
- Article 13** Children have the right to get and to share information, as long as the information is not damaging to them or to others.
- Article 14** Children have the right to think and believe what they want and to practise their religion, as long as they are not stopping other people from enjoying their rights. Parents should guide children on these matters.
- Article 15** Children have the right to meet with other children and young people and to join groups and organisations, as long as this does not stop other people from enjoying their rights.

- Article 16** Children have the right to privacy. The law should protect them from attacks against their way of life, their good name, their family and their home.
- Article 17** Children have the right to reliable information from the media. Mass media such as television, radio and newspapers should provide information that children can understand and should not promote materials that could harm children.
- Article 18** Both parents share responsibility for bringing up their children and should always consider what is best for each child. Governments should help parents by providing services to support them, especially if both parents work.
- Article 19** Governments should ensure that children are properly cared for and protect them from violence, abuse and neglect by their parents, or anyone else who looks after them.
- Article 20** Children who cannot be looked after by their own family must be looked after properly by people who respect their religion, culture and language.
- Article 21** When children are adopted the first concern must be what is best for them. The same rules should apply whether children are adopted in the country of their birth or if they are taken to live in another country.
- Article 22** Children who come into a country as refugees should have the same rights as children who are born in that country.
- Article 23** Children who have any kind of disability should receive special care and support so that they can live a full and independent life.
- Article 24** Children have the right to good quality health care, clean water, nutritious food and a clean environment so that they will stay healthy. Richer countries should help poorer countries achieve this.
- Article 25** Children who are looked after by their local authority rather than their parents should have their situation reviewed regularly.
- Article 26** The Government should provide extra money for the children of families in need.
- Article 27** Children have the right to a standard of living that is good enough to meet their physical and mental needs. The government should help families who cannot afford to provide this.
- Article 28** Children have the right to an education. Discipline in schools should respect children's human dignity. Primary education should be free. Wealthier countries should help poorer countries achieve this.

- Article 29** Education should develop each child's personality and talents to the full. It should encourage children to respect their parents, their cultures and other cultures.
- Article 30** Children have the right to learn and use the language and customs of their families, whether or not these are shared by the majority of the people in the country where they live, as long as this does not harm others.
- Article 31** Children have the right to relax, play and to join in a wide range of leisure activities.
- Article 32** Governments should protect children from work that is dangerous or that might harm their health or education.
- Article 33** Governments should provide ways of protecting children from dangerous drugs.
- Article 34** Governments should protect children from sexual abuse.
- Article 35** Governments should make sure that children are not abducted or sold.
- Article 36** Children should be protected from any activities that could harm their development.
- Article 37** Children who break the law should not be treated cruelly. They should not be put in a prison with adults and should be able to keep in contact with their family.
- Article 38** Governments should not allow children under 15 to join the army. Children in war zones should receive special protection.
- Article 39** Children who have been neglected or abused should receive special help to restore their self-respect.
- Article 40** Children who are accused of breaking the law should receive legal help. Prison sentences for children should only be used for the most serious offences.
- Article 41** If the laws of a particular country protects children better than the articles of the Convention, then those laws should override the Convention.
- Article 42** Governments should make the Convention known to all parents and children.

The Convention on the Rights of the Child has 54 articles in all. Articles 43-54 are about how adults and governments should work together to make sure that all children get all their rights.

**Go to [www.unicef.org/crc](http://www.unicef.org/crc) to read all the articles.**



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## Steps for Making an Organization *Child Safe*

The first step that an organization can take to ensure that it is “child safe” is to have written policies and procedures. These policies and procedures should be developed with the input of children and staff and should comply with international and national conventions on child rights and protection.

<p><b>Have written child protection policies and procedures</b></p> <p><i>What this should include:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Recognition of the rights of children</li> <li>2. Procedures on staff recruitment</li> <li>3. Guidelines on the use of photos and stories for communications</li> <li>4. Procedures for reporting child abuse</li> <li>5. Suggestions for positive disciplinary procedures, as well as a list of unacceptable disciplinary measures</li> <li>6. Guidelines on staff training</li> </ol>	<p><b>How it can be done</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children should participate in the writing of the policy</li> <li>• The policy must comply with international standards meant to preserve the dignity and worth of children (for example, the Convention on the Rights of the Child)</li> <li>• Staff members, volunteers, interns, and board members must read, understand, and sign the policy</li> <li>• The policy must be communicated to all children</li> <li>• The policy must be implemented to the fullest extent, with the help of children, and must be monitored for challenges and effectiveness</li> <li>• The policy must be reviewed, updated, and revised on a regular basis (for example, annually)</li> </ul>
<p><b>Have a written staff behavior code of conduct</b></p> <p><i>What the code of conduct should include:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Do’s and don’ts for staff behavior</li> <li>2. Procedures for investigating allegations of inappropriate behavior</li> <li>3. Clear consequences for failing to follow the code of conduct</li> </ol>	<p><b>How it can be done</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children should participate in the writing of the code of conduct</li> <li>• The code of conduct must comply with international standards meant to preserve the dignity and worth of children (for example, the Convention on the Rights of the Child)</li> <li>• Everyone in the organization who is in contact with children must read, understand, and sign the code of conduct</li> <li>• The code of conduct must be communicated to all children</li> <li>• The code of conduct must be reviewed, updated, and revised on a regular basis (for example, annually)</li> </ul>
<p><b>Have written anti-bullying policies and procedures</b></p> <p><i>What the policy should cover:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. How to raise awareness about bullying</li> <li>2. How to create opportunities to talk about bullying</li> <li>3. Procedures for investigating incidents and guidelines for listening</li> <li>4. Clear roles and responsibilities for staff members if bullying is reported</li> <li>5. How to communicate the policy to staff, volunteers, parents, donors, and children</li> </ol>	<p><b>How it can be done</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children should participate in the writing of the policy</li> <li>• Staff members, volunteers, interns, and children must understand and sign the policy</li> <li>• The policy must be communicated to all children</li> <li>• The policy must be implemented to the fullest extent, with the help of children, and must be monitored for shortcomings and effectiveness</li> <li>• The policy must be reviewed, updated, and revised on a regular basis (for example, annually)</li> </ul>

## Child Protection

It is every organization's responsibility to do its best to protect the children with whom it is in contact. The scope of this particular resource is concerned only with child protection within organizations.

### Child Protection Defined

*Child protection* is a broad term to describe philosophies, policies, standards, guidelines, and procedures to protect children from both intentional and unintentional harm. In the current context, it applies particularly to the duty of organizations—and individuals associated with those organizations—toward children in their care.

Many organizations and programs have had long-term participation by people who have developed intimate friendships and bonds. This intimacy is often based on trust and being part of a community. Sometimes these groups find it impossible to contemplate abuse occurring in their program. However, it is important to raise the issue of child abuse and its prevention within your organization, and to do so without creating suspicion and alarm. Some people may feel very threatened or uncomfortable about the issue of child abuse.

### Child Protection Policy Defined

A *child protection policy* is a statement of intent that demonstrates a commitment to safeguard children from harm and makes clear to all what is required in relation to the protection of children. A child protection policy helps to create a safe and positive environment for children and to show that the organization is taking its responsibility of care seriously.

*Child protection is not just about reading and signing a piece of paper: a child protection policy sets out guidelines and standards that must be put into practice.*

- Prevention of abuse
- Personnel recruitment and training
- Robust management systems
- Guidelines for appropriate and inappropriate behaviors and attitudes
- Guidelines for communications regarding children (use of pictures, stories, etc.)
- Recognizing, reporting, and reacting to allegations of abuse
- Ramifications of misconduct

### The benefits of becoming a *child safe* organization:

- Prevent rather than react to unfortunate incidents
- Fulfill the moral and legal imperatives of protecting children in your care
- Prevent the damage an incident of abuse would cause the children, their families, the community, and the organization
- Gain satisfaction from knowing that your organization is doing all that it can to protect children

**A Non-Negotiable Duty:** NGOs working for children's rights have an absolute duty to protect children from abuse, mistreatment, and exploitation from within the organization. This duty is imperative and non-negotiable. Without adequate standards and mechanisms of protection in place, an organization not only is failing in its primary duty of care but may also be responsible for fostering an environment of abuse.



## Participation of Children in Developing, Implementing & Monitoring Child Protection Policies & Procedures

*Child participation* occurs when anyone below the age of 18 takes part in a process or plays a role in a process, at the child's own level and according to the child's evolving capacities. Child participation involves the children in the decisions that affect their lives, the community, and the larger society in which they live.

*Helping children to find a voice is an essential step to helping them to claim their individual rights.*

### **Why is child participation so important?**

Not only is child participation an essential right, but it also has very practical benefits in relation to child protection:

*The best way to protect children is to empower them to protect themselves.*

One way of empowering children to protect themselves is to ensure that they acquire specific skills and information in relation to child protection, so that they are able to protect themselves in situations of risk. Such skills and information might include understanding what constitutes "good touch" and "bad touch," appropriate and inappropriate behavior and guidelines, and knowledge of and ability to use organizational reporting procedures.

A second way to empower children to protect themselves is to ensure active, ethical, and meaningful child participation at each stage of developing, implementing, and monitoring your child protection policies.

### **Note on sensitivity when working with children on child protection issues:**

Care must be taken to ensure that all children are given equal opportunities to participate, regardless of their sex, ethnicity, sexual orientation, level of ability, caste, social status, HIV status, or any other status.

Children's participation should be informed, voluntary, and age-appropriate. In other words, they should know what they are being asked to do and they should not be forced to do anything they don't want to.

Children should be made aware that they can stop participating in an activity or discussion at any point.

Children should be made aware that there is someone they can talk to if they feel uncomfortable about anything.

Boys and girls may feel or react differently to discussions about child protection. This needs to be taken into account and may require gender- and age-segregated discussion groups.

Children should never leave a session on child protection feeling unclear or upset. Make sure that there is plenty of opportunity for children to ask questions and air concerns.

Before children can effectively participate in any processes of the organization, it is necessary to have trained staff who can safely facilitate the session(s). On the following pages, you will find guidance on how to encourage child participation in your organization.

<b>ENCOURAGE CHILD PARTICIPATION</b>		
<b>What are the characteristics of empowered children in relation to child protection?</b>	<b>How do you empower children in your organization?</b>	<b>What activities and materials can help with this?</b>
Empowered children provide input into the development, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of child protection policies and procedures.	Set up child-friendly meetings with children to elicit their views on issues such as behavior guidelines (peer abuse/bullying), communication guidelines, risk assessment for different environments, ways of displaying information within the organization, and mechanisms for feedback on the implementation of child protection policies and procedures.	To get children’s input on monitoring and evaluating policies and procedures, ensure that children are included in discussions, either in separate meetings where the information is guaranteed to be accurately reported to the adult meetings, or in child-friendly joint meetings.  Children can also use a suggestion box or other means of safely sharing their views.
Empowered children know what behavior to expect from personnel and from other children, how they should treat others, and the consequences of not acting appropriately.	Develop the behavior code of conduct together with the children.  Hold an orientation session for the children on all relevant aspects of the organization’s child protection policies and procedures.	Discuss with the children what they like/dislike about behavior in the playground, in the classroom, in other locations, or at meetings. Do they all agree? Can they come to a consensus that can inform the organization’s policies? How do they think failing to follow the code of conduct should be dealt with? How do they think the information should be shared, documented, and displayed?
Empowered children understand how personal information about themselves can be used and feel comfortable and able to say “no” to individuals who may want to photograph them or share their story.	Involve children in the development of Communication guidelines.  Ensure that children’s consent is sought in a way that is easy for the child to understand, that clearly outlines how the information will be used, and that gives the child a genuine choice to opt out.	In a group session, show the children examples of how information about them and photographs of them are used by Organizations. Have the children agree to a List of dos and don’ts or guidelines. How do they think failing to follow these guidelines should be dealt with? How do they think the information should be shared, documented, and displayed? Consider allowing them to check and comment on the final written/illustrated version.  Have the children practice saying “no” in different types of situations and resisting pressure when they feel uncomfortable—for example, when someone asks “Can I take a photo of you?” or “Can I use a photo of you in a newspaper with a story about how you came to this shelter?”
Empowered children	Make sure that there are clear	Design a child-friendly orientation session that includes role plays on the child

<b>ENCOURAGE CHILD PARTICIPATION</b>		
<b>What are the characteristics of empowered children in relation to child protection?</b>	<b>How do you empower children in your organization?</b>	<b>What activities and materials can help with this?</b>
know how and when to speak out if they feel uncomfortable.	procedures in place, which have been communicated to the children, regarding whom to report allegations to. Ensure that children are taken seriously.	protection policy and procedures. For example, two or more children can volunteer to act out a situation (such as bullying in the playground or a member of staff losing their temper) while the other children can give advice in terms of what to do next.
Empowered children know whom to turn to if they feel uncomfortable.	Make sure children have access to a number of responsible adult personnel with whom they might develop a relationship of trust. All of these adults should have been trained on how to listen to children and how to respond to allegations from a child.	Ask the children to draw a picture of or name one or two adults in the organization whom they trust or feel they can talk to. (Drawings and names do not necessarily need to be shared with others.) What would they do if their favorite person was not around?
Empowered children know that there's a system in place to respond to inappropriate behavior by other children or staff.	Make sure children have been oriented on the organization's child protection policy (in an age-appropriate and child-friendly way) and are familiar with the processes in place.	Involve older children by asking them to assist in creating child-friendly versions of the organization's child protection policy. Ask children's opinion about how and where information should be displayed.
Empowered children are able to advise their friends on what to do if they feel uncomfortable.	Encourage open discussions in the organization on child protection issues between staff and children and between the children themselves. Create an open and aware culture.	Use role playing and stories where a sense of solidarity, friendship, and responsibility for others is encouraged.

<b>OBSTACLES AND SOLUTIONS TO CHILD PARTICIPATION IN CHILD PROTECTION</b>	
<b>Obstacles to Child Participation</b>	<b>Solutions to Facilitate Child Participation</b>
There is organizational reluctance to talk about child protection issues at all, let alone with children.	Break down taboos through the promotion of an “open and aware” culture within the organization where issues are discussed transparently. Discuss child protection with staff first so that they are comfortable before they speak with children on the issue.
Children are not consulted about organizational policy .  Children’s views are seen as disrespectful or a threat to organizational hierarchy.	Hold a training for senior management on child participation and on staff empowerment, with a focus on democratic decision making. Train senior management and staff working directly with children on child participation, possibly with the assistance of partner organizations. Encourage the exchange of information between organizations on the importance and benefits of child participation.
There are strong cultural or religious beliefs that perpetuate children’s low status in society.	Engage in sensitive discussions that explore personal views and beliefs and how these impact day-to-day work with children. Discuss the impact that these views have on that the best interests of the child, and align values to ensure that the best interests of the children are being met. Involve community cultural and religious leaders in information exchanges, discussions, and training opportunities.
It is difficult to develop child participation due to lack of financial or human resources.	Remember that child participation should be a core value of your work with children. Therefore, all program and organizational budgets need to reflect the real costs of child participation. International donors increasingly insist on evidence of child participation and are willing to fund such work.
Concern for age-appropriate discussions and vocabulary keep organizations from involving children (for example, mentioning sex organs or parts of the body).	Orient staff on different approaches to use with children of different ages, genders, and education levels. Reach out to other organizations that are conducting similar work for guidance and training.

## Recognizing Signs of Abuse

Recognizing signs of abuse is complex. There are potential warning signs that you should be aware of, but they should be observed and assessed with care. It should not be automatically assumed that abuse is occurring, and talking to the child will often reveal important information. It is necessary not to dismiss significant changes in behavior, fears, worries, and physical indicators a child is exhibiting.

Possible signs of physical abuse	Possible signs of emotional abuse
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bruises, burns, sprains, dislocations, bites, cuts</li> <li>• Improbable excuses given to explain injuries</li> <li>• Injuries that have not received medical attention</li> <li>• Injuries that occur to the body in places that are not normally exposed to falls, rough games, or play (for example, on the stomach, neck, back, and genitals)</li> <li>• Repeated urinary tract infections or unexplained stomach pains</li> <li>• Refusal to discuss injuries</li> <li>• Withdrawal from physical contact</li> <li>• Arms and legs kept covered in hot weather</li> <li>• Fear of returning home or of parents being contacted</li> <li>• Showing wariness or distrust of adults</li> <li>• Self-destructive tendencies</li> <li>• Being aggressive toward others</li> <li>• Being very passive and compliant</li> <li>• Chronic running away</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Delayed physical, mental, or emotional development</li> <li>• High anxiety</li> <li>• Delayed speech or sudden speech disorder</li> <li>• Fear of new situations</li> <li>• Low self-esteem</li> <li>• Inappropriate emotional responses to painful situations</li> <li>• Extremes of passivity or aggression</li> <li>• Drug or alcohol abuse</li> <li>• Chronic running away</li> <li>• Compulsive stealing</li> <li>• Obsessions or phobias</li> <li>• Sudden under-achievement or lack of concentration</li> <li>• Attention-seeking behavior</li> <li>• Persistent tiredness</li> <li>• Lying</li> </ul>
Possible signs of neglect	Possible signs of sexual abuse
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Frequent hunger</li> <li>• Failure to grow</li> <li>• Stealing or gorging on food</li> <li>• Poor personal hygiene</li> <li>• Constant tiredness</li> <li>• Inappropriate clothing (for example, wearing summer clothes in winter)</li> <li>• Frequent lateness or non-attendance at school</li> <li>• Untreated medical issues</li> <li>• Low self-esteem</li> <li>• Poor social relationships</li> <li>• Compulsive stealing</li> <li>• Drug or alcohol abuse</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Age-inappropriate sexualized behavior</li> <li>• Physical trauma (general and in genital and anal areas)</li> <li>• Behavioral indicators (general and sexual), which must be interpreted with regard to the individual child's level of functioning and developmental stage</li> <li>• Signs that are similar to physical abuse signs</li> </ul>

## Appropriate Adult Behavior

The appropriate behavior of adults (staff, volunteers, and parents) at the organization should be clearly defined and consistently monitored to ensure the safety of the children. The following sample documents can assist organizations in developing a comprehensive code of conduct and consequences for breaking it.

### Possible Signs of Concern Regarding Adult Behavior

- A person in whose presence a child becomes unusually distressed or agitated is a cause for concern.
- A staff member, volunteer, or parent asking a child to lie about anything (especially if it is about meeting that child) is a cause for concern.
- A staff member, volunteer, or parent who asks other adults at the organization to lie about a situation involving a child is a cause for concern.
- Private (outside of work) meetings between a child and a staff member or volunteer are a cause for concern.

### Unacceptable Adult Behavior

#### Staff members, volunteers, and consultants should never:

- Spend excessive time alone with children away from others
- Take children to their home, especially where they will be alone with them
- Hit or otherwise physically abuse children
- Develop physical or sexual relationships with children or any client
- Use language, make suggestions, or offer advice that is inappropriate, offensive, or abusive
- Behave in a manner that is inappropriate or sexually provocative
- Have a child with whom they are working stay the night at their home unsupervised
- Sleep in the same bed as a child with whom they are working
- Condone or participate in behavior with children that is illegal, unsafe, or abusive
- Act in ways intended to shame, humiliate, belittle, or degrade children, or otherwise perpetrate any form of emotional abuse
- Discriminate against, show different treatment toward, or favor particular children to the exclusion of others
- Perpetrate psychological and emotional abuse
- Expose children to hazardous work
- Stigmatize children (for example, based on gender, race, ability, class, or another factor.)
- Exploit children through child labor, sex work, or domestic work
- Discriminate between children of different genders (for example, punishing pregnant schoolgirls, favoring boy children or girl children)
- Neglect children (for example, not meeting children's needs or not offering adequate care to children)
- Infringe on children's rights (for example, their rights to privacy and confidentiality)
- Involve children in harmful practices (for example, female genital mutilation)
- Involve children in sexual relationships
- Beat or otherwise assault children

## Sample Code of Conduct

### Staff/volunteers/consultants/partners should always:

- Empower children—discuss with them their rights, what is acceptable and unacceptable, and what they can do if there is a problem
- Be loving, caring, and responsible
- Demonstrate encouragement and motivation
- Show equal treatment of girls and boys
- Try as much as possible to involve children in decision making, and allow children to make their own decisions, particularly about their own lives
- Be a positive role model
- Talk to children about their contact with staff or others and encourage them to raise any concerns
- Be aware of situations that may present risks to children and manage these
- Ensure that a culture of openness exists to enable any issues or concerns to be raised and discussed
- Ensure that a sense of accountability exists among staff so that poor practices or potentially abusive behavior does not go unchallenged

### Unacceptable adult behavior in relation to children: Staff/volunteers/consultants should never:

- Spend excessive time alone with children away from others
- Take children to their home, especially where they will be alone with the children
- Hit or otherwise physically abuse children
- Develop physical or sexual relationships with children
- Use language, make suggestions, or offer advice that is inappropriate, offensive, or abusive
- Behave in a manner that is inappropriate or sexually provocative
- Have children with whom they are working stay the night at their home unsupervised
- Sleep in the same bed as a child with whom they are working
- Do things for children of a personal nature that they can do for themselves
- Act in ways intended to shame, humiliate, belittle, or degrade children, or otherwise perpetrate any form of emotional abuse
- Beat or otherwise hurt children
- Discriminate against, show different treatment toward, or favor particular children to the exclusion of others
- Perpetrate psychological or emotional abuse
- Expose children to pornography
- Expose children to hazardous work
- Stigmatize children
- Exploit children through child labor, sex work, or domestic work
- Discriminate between children of different genders (for example, punishing pregnant schoolgirls, favoring boy children or girl children)
- Neglect children (for example, not meeting children's needs, or not offering adequate care to children)
- Infringe on children's rights (for example, their rights to privacy and confidentiality)
- Involve children in harmful practices (for example, female genital mutilation)
- Involve children in sexual relationships
- Condone or participate in behavior with children that is illegal, unsafe, or abusive

### The best way to protect children is to empower them to protect themselves.

- Be a good role model of how to behave with children, both in the home and in the workplace
- Be sensitive to acts of abuse, and be aware of children's concerns and complaints
- Respect children's dignity in homes, workplaces, and centers
- Listen carefully to children
- Act on children's concerns or problems immediately
- Act fairly on matters that involve children and adults together
- Play a positive role in safeguarding children and promoting their safety
- Offer appropriate advice and guidance
- Be sure that children know and understand the organization's policies and procedures

## Allegations from a Child

When a child tells you that they are uncomfortable, also known as a Child’s Disclosure of Abuse, it is important to remain calm, to affirm the child’s feelings, and to follow up in consistent and transparent ways.

### General points

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Accept what the child says</li> <li>• Keep calm</li> <li>• Don’t panic</li> <li>• Be honest</li> <li>• Do not appear shocked</li> <li>• Let the child know that you need to tell someone else</li> <li>• Assure the child that they are not to blame for the abuse</li> <li>• Do not fill in words, finish the child’s sentences, or make assumptions</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Never push for information</li> <li>• Be aware that the child may have been threatened</li> <li>• Make certain you distinguish between what the child has actually said and the inferences you may have made</li> <li>• Let the child know what you are going to do next and that you will let them know what happens</li> <li>• Ensure the child’s safety</li> </ul> |
|---|--|

Things to say	Things not to say
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “I believe you.”</li> <li>• “I am going to try to help you.”</li> <li>• “I will help you.”</li> <li>• “I am glad that you told me.”</li> <li>• “You are not to blame.”</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “You should have told someone before.”</li> <li>• “I can’t believe it! I’m shocked!”</li> <li>• “Oh, that explains a lot.”</li> <li>• “No, not ___; he’s a friend of mine.”</li> <li>• “I won’t tell anyone else.”</li> </ul>

### At the end of the disclosure

- Reassure the child that it was right to tell you.
- Let the child know what you are going to do next.
- Immediately seek help.
- Write down accurately what the child has told you. Sign and date your notes. Keep all notes in a secure place for an indefinite period. These are essential in helping your organization and the authorities decide what is best for the child, and can serve as evidence if necessary.
- Seek help for yourself if you feel you need support.
- Ensure the child’s immediate and near-term safety.

Take proper steps to ensure the physical safety and psychological well-being of the child. This may include referring the child for medical treatment or to a psychologist.

<div style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">                     Reporting                      the                      matter                 </div>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If your concerns involve immediate harm to a child, act without delay, as inaction may place the child in further danger.</li> <li>• If you know any information about the maltreatment of a child, it is your responsibility to tell someone.</li> <li>• The process leading to decision making should be well documented, and all facts or written allegations and responses should be kept on file.</li> </ul> <p>reported the matter.</p>
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## Sample Report Form for Suspected Abuse

If you have knowledge that a child's safety might be in danger, please complete this form to the best of your knowledge. This form is to be used as a tool to develop the most unbiased, information-based report possible. For confidentiality reasons, the report should be written and signed solely by you. It will be held in a safe and secure place and treated in the strictest confidence.

### About You

Your name \_\_\_\_\_

Your job title \_\_\_\_\_

Your workplace \_\_\_\_\_

Your relationship to the child \_\_\_\_\_

Contact details \_\_\_\_\_

### About the child

Child's name \_\_\_\_\_

Child's gender \_\_\_\_\_

Child's age \_\_\_\_\_

Child's address \_\_\_\_\_

Child's guardians \_\_\_\_\_

### About the concern

Was the abuse observed or suspected? \_\_\_\_\_

Is this concern based on firsthand information or information divulged to you by someone else?

(If so, who?) \_\_\_\_\_

Date of alleged incident \_\_\_\_\_

Time of alleged incident \_\_\_\_\_

Location of alleged incident \_\_\_\_\_

Name of alleged perpetrator \_\_\_\_\_

Nature of allegation \_\_\_\_\_

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Your personal observations (visible injuries, child's emotional state, social cues, etc.) \_\_\_\_\_

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Any other information not previously covered \_\_\_\_\_

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Were there any other children or adults involved in the alleged incident? \_\_\_\_\_

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Action taken \_\_\_\_\_

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Signed \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

## Child Protection & Children with Disabilities

Organizations working with children should be aware of the particular vulnerabilities of children with disabilities, as well as the specific challenges to their participation in the development and monitoring of policies. Children with disabilities should be encouraged to participate in all activities as long as it poses no threat to their well-being.

### Disability Defined

Disabled children include those with movement, speech, visual, hearing, learning, intellectual, hidden, and multiple impairments, and they are further disabled by being discriminated against and excluded. Children with mild impairments can be severely disabled by lack of access to their basic needs and rights.

### Disabled children are particularly vulnerable to abuse.

- They are dependent on other people for their care.
- They sometimes don't understand that they are being abused.
- They may not have the opportunity to tell people what is happening.
- Their difficulties with communication can make it hard to tell what is happening to them.

### Disabled children are abused in many different ways. Examples include:

- Lack of basic care—inadequate food, shelter, or healthcare
- Lack of opportunities to develop, restriction of freedom, or lack of social interaction
- Abandonment
- Degrading treatment—ostracism, name-calling, or other verbal abuse or insults
- Excessive medical or rehabilitative “treatment” that can be harmful
- Violence (including violence masked as punishment)
- Sexual abuse

### What to Look Out For

Because disabled children may not be able to tell you they are being abused, here are a few things to be aware of. They do not necessarily mean that the child is being abused, but if you notice any of these signs, you should conduct follow-up.

- Sudden unexplained changes in behavior
- Soiling
- Sexualized behavior
- Loss of appetite
- Self-harming
- New or unexplained marks or bruising
- Signs of general distress or agitation

### What special measures need to be taken to protect disabled children?

In light of the particular vulnerabilities of disabled children to abuse, concerns need to be taken seriously and organizations need to proactively to prevent abuse from taking place. Practical steps include:

- a) Emphasize non-discrimination
- b) Emphasize de-institutionalization
- c) Listen to children's views
- d) Ensure that special communication needs are met
- e) Include disability issues in child rights programming

## A Child Rights Approach to Discipline

Disciplining children is often a hidden aspect of parenting and working with children. To ensure the safety and healthy development of children, it is important to be transparent about discipline practices and aware of research that specifies the most effective and rights-based discipline approaches.

### The Wrong Types of Punishment

- Corporal or physical punishment, or the threat of it, includes hitting the child with the hand or with an object (such as a cane, belt, whip, or shoes); kicking, shaking, or throwing the child; pinching the child; pulling the child's hair; forcing the child to stay in uncomfortable or undignified positions or to engage in excessive physical exercise; and burning or scarring the child.
- Humiliating or degrading punishment takes various forms, such as psychological punishment, verbal abuse, ridicule, isolation, or ignoring the child.

### Why Physical Punishment Is Wrong

In the large body of international research concerning physical punishment, no single study suggests that it does good, while numerous studies suggest that it does harm. The following are some of the key findings:

1. *Hitting children is physically dangerous* because children are small and fragile relative to punishing adults. Misplaced or dodged blows that are intended to be light can cause ruptured eardrums or falls. Shaking babies or toddlers can cause concussion, brain damage, and death.
2. *Mild punishments in infancy are so ineffective that they tend to escalate as children grow.* The “little slap” of babyhood often becomes a real spanking by four years and a belting by seven. While not all physical abuse of children is a simple escalation of physical punishment, parents convicted of cruelty frequently explain that their ill-treatment of the child began with disciplinary intent.
3. *Physical punishment can be emotionally harmful to children.* Research shows that aggression breeds aggression. Children subjected to physical punishment are more likely than others to be aggressive to siblings; to bully other children at school; to take part in aggressively anti-social behavior in adolescence; to be violent to their spouses and children when they are grown; and to commit violent crimes.

### Positive Types of Discipline

- “Do” works better than “don’t”; rewards work better than punishments.
- Show and tell what the child *should* do—not just what they *shouldn’t* do.
- Explain your real reasons—“because I say so” doesn’t provide a lesson.
- Try to say “yes” and “well done” at least as often as “no” and “stop that”
- Rely on rewards like hugs and jokes, not on punishments like smacks and yells.
- Ignore minor silliness.
- When the child does something wrong, explain what it is and how to put things right.
- Even when you dislike a child’s behavior, never suggest that you dislike the child.

### What is necessary to know and do to avoid conflicts with children?

One of the most important things that helps to avoid or reduce conflicts is to know and understand the **stages of child development**, as well as the characteristics, limits, and appropriate responses at each of these stages. Lack of knowledge of these stages frequently generates unreal expectations in adults.

## Guidelines for Developing an Anti-Bullying Policy

Bullying is a difficult issue to tackle, largely because it is generally a hidden one. Child victims of bullying often avoid talking about it for fear of the bully or out of shame for being bullied. The long-term effects of bullying can contribute to low self-esteem and depression. Developing an anti-bullying policy is a first step for your organization to take to address the issue.

The process for *developing an anti-bullying policy should include all staff and children*, where possible, as only commitment to the policy by all will make it effective and ensure that bullying is addressed openly. *Involvement of young people in the solution has been shown to be a key factor in making an anti-bullying policy successful.*

### What counts as bullying?

The first step is to gauge the amount of bullying that is taking place and the nature of the bullying within your organization by having open dialogues and making observations. The next step is for staff and children to come to a consensus on a definition of what behavior counts as bullying, as different people may have different views. Below is a list of possible behaviors that could be considered bullying:

- |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Physical assault (violence)</li> <li>• Harassment</li> <li>• Threats</li> <li>• Forcing someone to hand over money</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teasing (for example, name-calling)</li> <li>• Witnesses who watch and laugh</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Spreading rumors</li> <li>• Initiation ceremonies</li> <li>• Gang bullying</li> <li>• Exclusion by peers</li> </ul> |
|--|--|--|

### There are a few key questions that staff may need to consider:

1. *How much bullying do we see happening at our organization/community?*
2. *How much bullying do we think is happening that we don't see?*
3. *Where is bullying happening?*
4. *When is bullying happening?*
5. *What do staff and young people think should happen?*
6. *What strategies could be used for dealing with bullying?*

### Aims of the Policy

A policy should include	The policy should cover
<p>Approaches for prevention of bullying</p> <p>Intervention where bullying occurs</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How to raise awareness of the issue</li> <li>• How to create opportunities to talk about bullying</li> <li>• How to and who will supervise key areas where bullying occurs</li> <li>• How to develop positive forms of peer support</li> <li>• Procedures for investigating incidents of bullying</li> <li>• Guidelines for reporting and listening to reports of bullying</li> <li>• An action agenda that assigns staff and volunteers goal, roles, and responsibilities</li> <li>• How to communicate the policy to everyone involved in the organization</li> </ul>

## Helpful & Unhelpful Responses to Bullying

<p><b>Staff</b> Recommendations for staff who are dealing with bullying</p>	<p><b>Helpful responses</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Listening to all involved</li> <li>• Modeling a non-bullying environment (for example, avoid calling the children any names or putting them down in any way)</li> </ul> <p><b>Key messages that a victim of bullying needs to hear</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “It’s not your fault”—The child being bullied may need help to recognize this. The person doing the bullying can make the child feel that it is the child’s fault that the bullying is happening. The victim may also feel that they need to change, when the problem is actually with the bullying behavior.</li> <li>• “You do not have to face this alone”—Isolation is a big effect of bullying, and the stigma experienced by the person who is being bullied may create an obstacle in asking for help.</li> </ul> <p><b>Unhelpful responses</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Trivializing or patronizing the child when they reveal that they are being bullied</li> <li>• Ignoring the situation</li> <li>• Giving inappropriate advice (for example, telling the victim to fight the person who is bullying them, as the victim would then risk being seen as a bully)</li> </ul>
<p><b>Person being bullied</b> Recommendations for the person who is being bullied</p>	<p><b>Helpful responses</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Talking to someone they trust</li> <li>• Seeking different friendships or more friendships</li> <li>• Recognizing that it is not their fault</li> </ul> <p><b>Unhelpful responses</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dealing with it alone</li> <li>• Taking no action about it</li> <li>• Believing all that is said about them</li> </ul>
<p><b>Peers and witnesses</b> Recommendations for witnesses of bullying</p>	<p><b>Helpful responses</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encouraging the victim to talk to an adult (and offering to accompany the victim if they are afraid to)</li> </ul> <p><b>Unhelpful responses</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Telling the victim to deal with it alone</li> <li>• Not saying anything</li> <li>• Laughing or joining in the bullying</li> </ul>
<p><b>Person who is bullying</b> Recommendations for the bully</p>	<p><b>Helpful responses</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Considering what they have in common with the person they are bullying</li> <li>• Considering how their actions make the other person feel</li> <li>• Sincerely apologizing</li> <li>• Talking to a trusted adult about their feelings</li> </ul> <p><b>Unhelpful responses</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continuing to bully</li> <li>• Denying their actions</li> <li>• Picking a new victim</li> <li>• Not communicating their feelings</li> </ul>

*Those who are bullying other children have often either been bullied themselves or may be unhappy in their own lives. While not accepting the behavior, staff can help bullies to understand why they are bullying others and to help them deal with the real issues.*

## Communications & Publications

Every child has a right to be accurately represented through both words and images. The organization’s portrayal of each child must not be manipulative or sensationalized in any way, but must provide a balanced depiction of the child’s life and circumstances. Children must be presented as human beings with their identity and dignity preserved.

Avoid	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Language and images that could possibly degrade, victimize, or shame children</li> <li>• Generalizations that do not accurately reflect the nature of the child’s situation</li> <li>• Discrimination of any kind</li> <li>• Taking pictures out of context—pictures should be accompanied by an explanatory caption where possible and should be relevant to any accompanying text</li> </ul>

Best Practices	
<b>Permission</b>	Permission should always be sought from the children themselves before taking photographs, except under exceptional circumstances, based on the children’s best interests.
<b>Privacy</b>	Personal and physical information that could be used to identify the location of a child within a country and cause them to be put at risk should not be used on the organization’s website or in any other form of communication for general or public purposes. Where it is necessary to use case studies to highlight work, names of children should be changed.
<b>Consent</b>	To the greatest extent possible, the organization should acquire informed consent or the permission of the child, the child’s guardian, and/or the institution responsible for the child, before using any image for publicity, fundraising, awareness raising, or any other purpose. The purpose should be made clear to the consent giver.
<b>Security</b>	Information about children’s lives and photographs of children (including information stored on a computer) should be kept in secure files. Access to these should be limited to those who need to use them during the course of their work.
<b>Portrayal</b>	Photographs of children should portray the children in a dignified and respectful way. The photograph should not shame or embarrass a child and should be presented in context.

## Staff Recruitment

Effective child protection starts with having a trustworthy and well-trained staff that is committed to the mission of the organization. When an organization is hiring new staff or volunteers, the organization must include measures to ensure that the new personnel will pose no risk to the children's safety.

### Applicants may be expected to:

1. Sign a personal declaration stating any criminal convictions, including older convictions that might not legally need to be declared.
2. Accept and commit to the organization's child protection policy and code of conduct for working with children.
  - The purpose of this up-front, transparent approach even prior to an interview is to deter abusers from applying to the organization.
3. Clear a security check conducted by the police or criminal records bureau, where possible.

**During the interview:** The interview should be seen as an opportunity to assess candidates' suitability in relation to child protection.

1. The interview panel should pay attention to:
  - gaps in employment history (if the candidate has had a career working in children's issues)
  - frequent changes of employment or address (if the candidate has had a career working in children's issues)
  - reasons for leaving employment (especially if this appears sudden)
  - unusual body language and evasion, or contradiction and discrepancies in answers given (although this must be interpreted in context)
2. It is important in the interview that the issue of child abuse is openly discussed and that the interview panel reinforces that the organization has a comprehensive child protection policy and procedures in place. Transparency is an important part of abuse prevention: an abuser may decide that there are not enough opportunities to offend in an open and aware culture.
3. Direct and challenging questions encourage self-selection (in other words, encourage candidates to withdraw from the process).
  - a. Suggested questions (the exact questions should be adapted to the level of the position being applied for):
    - How and when might it be appropriate to comfort a child?
    - When might it be appropriate and inappropriate to be alone with a child?
    - Is there anything that we might find out about during reference checks that you'd like to talk about?

**Following the interview:** After the interview, the candidate should understand that the organization will follow up with references and security clearances. An offer of employment will not be made until the organization is certain that the candidate will be able to comply with and enforce organizational child protection policies.



## Personnel Training & Orientation

An organization should conduct a training needs assessment for all staff to identify who needs to be trained, what type of information they need to know, who will conduct the training, when the training needs to occur, and what materials are needed to conduct the training. A suggested template for a personnel training needs assessment follows.

Personnel Training Needs Assessment Template
<b>1. Initial/basic awareness raising and training</b> on the organization's child protection policy for existing staff and associated personnel
<b>2. Initial/basic awareness raising and training</b> on the organization's child protection policy <b>for new staff</b> and associated personnel when they join the organization
<b>3. General refresher training</b> to remind personnel of procedures in place and to update the policies and procedures with any new information (suggested once a year)
<b>4. Overseas briefings</b> for personnel due to travel overseas on project visits to remind personnel of behavior codes of conduct and use of photography (communications guidelines) and reporting procedures in the event that the visitor may witness abuse while traveling
<b>5. Specialized briefings</b> and training for particular audiences such as sponsorship staff, communications staff, and media and fundraising staff on the use of images and case studies.

*Ensure that participants have plenty of opportunity to ask questions and discuss issues of concern as part of the training. Trainers should know where they can go for advice if they need additional help in answering these questions.*

*Where possible, get feedback from the participants on how the briefing or training session went, with suggestions for future improvement.*

### Training Needs Assessment for Your Organization

Who needs training? (name/position)	What do they need to know?	By when?	Who will train them?	Who will check that it's been done?	How will you do it and where will it take place? (materials/methodology)
			<b>Sample Training Needs Assessment</b>		

