



Child Safe
Organisations
National Principles

Getting started on your child safe journey: Introductory self-assessment tool for organisations

Children have a right to safety - emotionally, mentally and physically. Everyone has a role to play in keeping children safe from harm. Harm can take many forms such as accidental injury, exposure to physical hazards, bullying by peers, neglect, emotional abuse, physical abuse and sexual abuse. Organisations providing services to or working with children, whether run by staff or by volunteers, have a duty of care to keep children safe and to respect their rights.

The Child Safe Organisations Introductory self-assessment tool for organisations is **a first step** for any organisation working with children and young people when considering child safety in their organisation. It can help an organisation:

- identify priority areas for improvement in their child safety policies, procedures and practices
- learn about the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations (National Principles)
- commit to future action
- monitor improvement.

Organisations may be regulated through existing national, state and territory legislation. These are not considered in detail in this tool.



This tool should be completed by people in the organisation who are knowledgeable about the day-to-day activities, policies and procedures and staff and volunteer experiences in the organisation. These people exist at many levels of an organisation and we recommend that **more than one person completes this self-assessment exercise**, as a group or separately. If multiple people complete this tool separately, we recommend that you compare and discuss your responses to identify areas for improvement. This tool could also be used for seeking feedback from children and young people and their parents or carers to further inform considerations of child safety within your organisation.

(Note: If you work or volunteer for a large organisation that provides a range of services, this tool will work best if you focus on a particular service or activity where individuals in your organisation interact with children and young people).

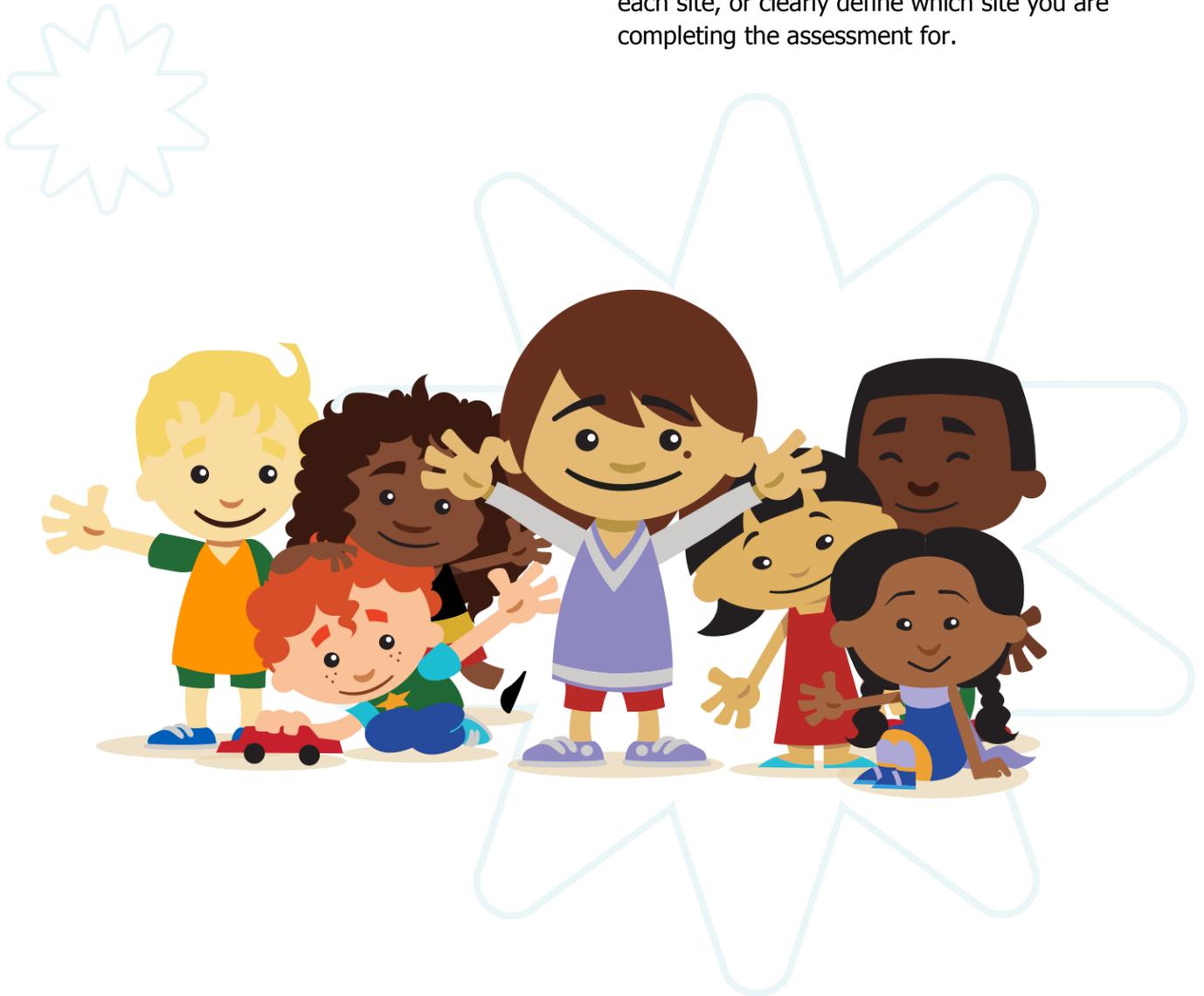
The statements in this tool reflect aspects of the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations. The ten principles collectively show that a child safe organisation is one that creates a culture, adopts strategies and takes action to promote child wellbeing and prevent harm to children and young people. This introductory self-assessment tool gives examples of what some of the aspects of the National Principles might look like in practice.

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How to use:

1. Read the Statement and examples in the Questions column.
2. Mark whether the statement is true 'always', 'most of the time', 'sometimes', 'rarely' or 'never' in the Scale column. You may find that some examples in the speech bubbles apply but some do not. There is space for comment where you can note if this is the case.
3. Mark 'other' if you don't know or are unsure.
4. Complete steps 1 and 2 for all the statements.
5. Once you have finished going through the Questions column and filled out the Scale column for each row, fill out the Next Steps.
6. Fill out the Next Steps focussing in particular on the statements where you've selected 'rarely', 'never' or 'other'. Fill out who will take these next steps and when the next steps will be completed by. You can include in the Next Steps evidence of how you do this, details of how you could do it better, as well as details of who will take these steps and timeframes.
7. Use the [National Principles](#), their key action areas and indicators to help you consider future actions.

Completing this tool will involve making judgement calls about how often a statement is true, the relevance of the examples suggested and what future action you take. If you work across multiple sites you may wish to complete this assessment for each site, or clearly define which site you are completing the assessment for.



Principle 1: Child safety and wellbeing is embedded in organisational leadership, governance and culture.

1) Leaders in the organisation model **attitudes and behaviours** that show they are committed to child safety and wellbeing.

- Always
- Most of the time
- Sometimes
- Rarely
- Never
- Other (*don't know, unsure*)

Comment:

What might this look like?

Leaders in the organisation:

- inform themselves about child safety and wellbeing
- make a public commitment to child safety and wellbeing
- put the best interests of children first at all times
- encourage all staff and volunteers of the organisation to value and ensure child safety and wellbeing
- support anyone to safely disclose their concerns and are responsive
- are open to suggestions and complaints.

Next steps:

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By whom:

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By when:

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2) Staff and volunteers understand their **responsibilities** for child safe practices and use this to inform their actions.

- Always
- Most of the time
- Sometimes
- Rarely
- Never
- Other (*don't know, unsure*)

Comment:

What might this look like?

In the organisation:

- child safe policies are integrated into everyday work practices and everyone understands what they need to do
- there are named people to discuss practices and concerns with
- policies and procedures refer to additional information, support and contacts
- responsibilities of all staff and volunteers are reflected in position descriptions
- all staff take responsibility for their actions to ensure child safe practices.

Next steps:

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By whom:

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Refer to **National Principle 1**, its key action areas and indicators to help you consider future actions.



Principle 2: Children and young people are informed about their rights, participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously.

3) Children and young people share their views and **participate** in decision making.

- Always
- Most of the time
- Sometimes
- Rarely
- Never
- Other (*don't know, unsure*)

Comment:

What might this look like?

- Children and young people learn about their rights, including to safety, information, to be listened to and to have their views respected.
- Children and young people can recognise safe environments.
- Children and young people know how to seek help.
- Children and young people have opportunities to give their opinion on what they like and don't like about the organisation, how things could be better and what makes them feel safe and unsafe in the organisation.

Next steps:

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By whom:

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By when:

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4) The organisation **values** children's views.

- Always
- Most of the time
- Sometimes
- Rarely
- Never
- Other (*don't know, unsure*)

Comment:

What might this look like?

Staff and volunteers in the organisation:

- listen to what children say
- understand that children may communicate their views non-verbally, e.g. through changes in behaviour or participation
- consider and reflect children's views to improve their activities and processes e.g. through discussion in team or management meetings
- provide age appropriate platforms for children and young people to communicate and participate e.g. through games, creative activities and group discussion.

Next steps:

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By whom:

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Refer to **National Principle 2**, its key action areas and indicators to help you consider future actions.



Principle 3: Families and communities are informed and involved in promoting child safety and wellbeing.

5) The organisation **communicates with families and communities** about how they ensure child safety and wellbeing.

- Always
- Most of the time
- Sometimes
- Rarely
- Never
- Other (*don't know, unsure*)

What might this look like?

The organisation:

- informs families and communities of the organisation's child safety and wellbeing policies and procedures e.g. through a website, newsletter, at induction and open days
- provides information in accessible ways
- considers that communities include P&C committees, volunteers, Elders, and local community organisations.

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6) The organisation **involves families and communities** in conversations about child safety and wellbeing in the organisation.

- Always
- Most of the time
- Sometimes
- Rarely
- Never
- Other (*don't know, unsure*)

What might this look like?

- Actively inviting feedback on the organisation from families and communities e.g. through informal discussions, meetings and surveys.
- Seeking feedback in accessible ways.
- Consulting with parents and carers about their children.
- Encouraging and supporting parents and carers to talk to their children about safety and wellbeing.

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Refer to **National Principle 3**, its key action areas and indicators to help you consider future actions.



Principle 4: Equity is upheld and diverse needs respected in policy and practice.

7) All children are able to participate in the organisation, regardless of circumstances and backgrounds.

- Always
- Most of the time
- Sometimes
- Rarely
- Never
- Other (*don't know, unsure*)

What might this look like?

The organisation is accessible to, actively seeks to engage and pays particular attention to the needs of:

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people
- children and young people with disability
- children and young people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds
- children and young people who are unable to live at home
- lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex children and young people.

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8) Staff and volunteers effectively support children and young people with diverse needs.

- Always
- Most of the time
- Sometimes
- Rarely
- Never
- Other (*don't know, unsure*)

What might this look like?

Staff and volunteers:

- take children seriously and respond meaningfully when children communicate about their feelings, needs and concerns
- put children's best interests first
- create culturally safe spaces welcoming to children
- learn about the circumstances and experiences that increase a child's vulnerability to harm
- recognise needs of children and young people from diverse backgrounds and circumstances
- consider how safety and wellbeing, communication and participation might differ for children and young people from diverse backgrounds and circumstances.

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Refer to **National Principle 4**, its key action areas and indicators to help you consider future actions.



Principle 5: People working with children and young people are suitable and supported to reflect child safety and wellbeing values in practice.

9) Staff and volunteers are *carefully selected*.

What might this look like?

- Child safety and wellbeing is emphasised in advertising, referee checks and staff and volunteer pre-employment screening.
- The organisation verifies applicants' identity, qualifications, professional registration and relevant background/working with children/police checks.
- The organisation assesses applicants' values, motives and attitudes for compatibility with a culture of child safety and wellbeing.
- The recruitment process may include panel interviews, transparent short-listing and standardised reference checks.
- The recruitment process involves children, families and communities where appropriate.

- Always
- Most of the time
- Sometimes
- Rarely
- Never
- Other (*don't know, unsure*)

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10) The organisation *continuously supports* and supervises staff and volunteers to meet their child safety responsibilities.

What might this look like?

The organisation:

- covers child safety policies and procedures in inductions
- delivers or provides access to regular training, professional development and/or information sessions
- ensures everyone is informed about policies and procedures and knows how to enact them
- actively communicates internal and external supports that are available
- ensures child safety and wellbeing is expressed as a core element of supervisory processes and meeting agendas
- regularly reviews staff and volunteer performance.

- Always
- Most of the time
- Sometimes
- Rarely
- Never
- Other (*don't know, unsure*)

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Refer to **National Principle 5**, its key action areas and indicators to help you consider future actions.



Principle 6: Processes to respond to complaints and concerns are child focused.

11) The organisation has **accessible procedures for raising and responding to concerns and complaints.**

- Always
- Most of the time
- Sometimes
- Rarely
- Never
- Other (*don't know, unsure*)

What might this look like?

- Information about raising and responding to concerns and complaints is in easy English for individuals with different levels of English literacy.
- Information about raising and responding to concerns and complaints is available in child-friendly formats.
- Information about raising and responding to concerns and complaints is available on the website and downloadable.
- Staff and volunteers discuss and invite feedback.
- Organisations display materials on their approach to child safety and wellbeing where appropriate.

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12) The organisation **takes all concerns and complaints seriously, and follows up with everyone involved.**

- Always
- Most of the time
- Sometimes
- Rarely
- Never
- Other (*don't know, unsure*)

What might this look like?

- The process of handling complaints and concerns prioritises the safety and wellbeing of children and young people.
- There are clear roles and responsibilities for leadership, staff and volunteers.
- There is a clear process for raising complaints and concerns, including to appropriate authorities when relevant.
- There is a record keeping system that is linked to decision making and disciplinary processes.
- There are several pathways to escalate concerns.
- Staff and volunteers know when and how to report to relevant authorities.
- Relevant people are kept informed of the progress and outcome.
- Feedback and complaints lead to improvement in policy and practice.

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Refer to **National Principle 6**, its key action areas and indicators to help you consider future actions.



Principle 7: Staff and volunteers are equipped with the knowledge, skills and awareness to keep children and young people safe through ongoing education and training.

13) Staff and volunteers are regularly encouraged to and have access to **information and training** on child safety and wellbeing.

What might this look like?

Information and training covers:

- children’s rights
- risk management in child safety and wellbeing
- how to build culturally safe environments for children and young people
- how to recognise signs of child harm
- how to respond to issues of child safety and wellbeing, including disclosures of child harm
- training resources and tools which are consistent, simple, accessible and easy to use.

- Always
- Most of the time
- Sometimes
- Rarely
- Never
- Other (*don’t know, unsure*)

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14) Staff and volunteers **respond effectively** when issues of child safety and wellbeing arise.

What might this look like?

Staff and volunteers:

- take children seriously when they communicate about their feelings, needs and concerns
- put children’s best interests first
- follow processes for complaints and concerns (see Principle 6)
- know when and how to report to relevant authorities
- learn about the circumstances and experiences that increase a child’s vulnerability to harm
- review complaints, concerns and safety incidents to inform continuous improvement.

- Always
- Most of the time
- Sometimes
- Rarely
- Never
- Other (*don’t know, unsure*)

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Refer to **National Principle 7**, its key action areas and indicators to help you consider future actions.



Principle 8: Physical and online environments promote safety and wellbeing while minimising opportunity for children and young people to be harmed.

15) The organisation’s **risk management strategy** addresses physical risks.

- Always
- Most of the time
- Sometimes
- Rarely
- Never
- Other (*don't know, unsure*)

What might this look like?

The risk management strategy:

- identifies, assesses and takes steps to minimise the opportunity for children to be harmed
- focuses on preventing child harm, including peer-to-peer harm
- considers increased risk with specific roles and activities, and children with heightened vulnerability e.g. children with disability
- is outlined in policies and procedures and included in training of staff and volunteers.

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16) The organisation’s **risk management strategy** addresses online risks.

- Always
- Most of the time
- Sometimes
- Rarely
- Never
- Other (*don't know, unsure*)

What might this look like?

The risk management strategy for online safety:

- identifies, assesses and takes steps to minimise the opportunity for children to be harmed
- focuses on preventing child harm, including peer-to-peer harm
- considers increased risk with specific roles and activities, and children with heightened vulnerability e.g. children with disability
- is outlined in policies and procedures and included in training of staff and volunteers.

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Refer to **National Principle 8**, its key action areas and indicators to help you consider future actions.



Principle 9: Implementation of the national child safe principles is regularly reviewed and improved.

17) The organisation **regularly reviews** their child safe practices.

- Always
- Most of the time
- Sometimes
- Rarely
- Never
- Other (*don't know, unsure*)

Comment:

What might this look like?

- Complaints, concerns and safety incidents are analysed in a timely manner to inform continuous improvement.
- Reports on the findings of reviews are provided to all members of the organisation.
- Timeframes for reviews are committed to and met.
- Reviews are linked to plans about future action on child safety and wellbeing in the organisation.

Next steps:

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By whom:

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18) The organisation uses reviews to **improve** their child safe practices.

- Always
- Most of the time
- Sometimes
- Rarely
- Never
- Other (*don't know, unsure*)

Comment:

What might this look like?

- Regular opportunities to specifically discuss child safe practices in the organisation e.g. meetings, forums and planning days.
- Seeking feedback from children, young people, families and communities about child safe practices in the organisation.
- Creating a plan for future action on child safety and wellbeing in the organisation.
- Reviews feed into future plans for child safety and wellbeing and these plans are supported across the organisation.

Next steps:

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Refer to **National Principle 9**, its key action areas and indicators to help you consider future actions.



Principle 10: Policies and procedures document how the organisation is safe for children and young people.

19) The organisation’s policies and procedures on child safety are documented and easily **accessible**.

- Always
- Most of the time
- Sometimes
- Rarely
- Never
- Other (*don't know, unsure*)

Comment:

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What might this look like?

- Materials are in easy English for individuals with different levels of English literacy.
- Materials are available in child-friendly formats.
- Materials are easily available on the website and downloadable.
- Staff and volunteers discuss and invite feedback.
- Organisations display child safe materials where appropriate.

Next steps:

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20) Everyone in the organisation knows how to apply the child safety and wellbeing **policies and procedures**.

- Always
- Most of the time
- Sometimes
- Rarely
- Never
- Other (*don't know, unsure*)

Comment:

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What might policies and procedures cover?

- The organisation’s commitment to child safety and wellbeing.
- Communicating with children, young people, families and communities.
- Staff and volunteer recruitment, ongoing training and support.
- Management of physical and online risks.
- Processes for responding to complaints and concerns about child safety and wellbeing.
- Requirements that staff and volunteers act in accordance with the child safety and wellbeing policies and procedures, including the Code of Conduct.

Next steps:

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By whom:

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Go back and fill out your next steps for all the statements. Pay particular attention to the statements where you’ve selected ‘rarely’, ‘never’ or ‘other’. Fill out who will take these next steps and when the next steps will be completed by.

Use the [National Principles](#), their key action areas and indicators to help you consider future actions.

