

Child Safety

Your Rights

All children have rights. You have the right to live, to be treated fairly and to reach your full potential. You can make your own decisions and you should have a say in the issues that affect you. You have the right to be safe and cared for.

Empowering Children

We think all children should have rights and make choices about their lives. We listen to what children want and make sure they feel in control.



Concerns and Complaints

If you have a concern about something at Distinctive Options or you would like to make a complaint, you can tell any staff member or the program coordinator. You can call us on 9740 7100. We can help fix anything that is wrong. If it is a big problem, the Executive Manager – Support Services or Chief Executive Officer can also help.



Advocacy

Sometimes you might need someone to speak up for you. A person who does this is called an advocate. An advocate can help you to get what you need and make people listen to you.

If you need an advocate, you can call the Association for Children with a Disability on 9880 7000 or email acdsupport@acd.org.au.



Risks

We look at risks to make sure that children are kept safe and healthy as much as possible. If we find a risk to children, we will do our best to get rid of it or make it smaller.



Culturally Appropriate

We believe it is very important to keep Indigenous children and children from other backgrounds safe. We know that culture is very important. We do not allow any behaviour that makes people with culture differences sad or angry. Some of these children may have had scary things happen when they were younger. We want to look after children with different cultural backgrounds. We know children with disabilities may also be hurt by other people. We want to make sure everyone knows that children with disabilities have rights and must be respected.



Finding New Staff

We only get new staff who will be good to children. We want to make sure that children will always be safe at Distinctive Options.

- We make sure people who want a job with us have worked with children who have a disability.
- We tell people about jobs that they can try to get at Distinctive Options. We make sure that they know we will ask questions and do checks to make sure children will be safe with them.
- All new staff are asked questions before they can start working at Distinctive Options.
- All staff are checked to make sure that they have done nothing bad to children. We check with the police and talk to the place that the staff member used to work.
- New staff are watched closely by old staff to make sure that children will be safe around them.
- Staff learn about child safety and what they have to do to keep children safe.
- All staff have to follow the rules of Distinctive Options if they want to work here.



Child Custody

Families must tell staff about custody issues. Families must give staff copies of legal documents. The information will be kept secret.



Child Abuse

If a child is hurt by an adult, it is called Child Abuse.

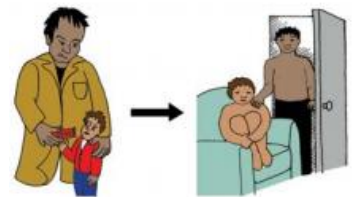
Physical Abuse – When someone hurts your body.



Sexual Abuse – When someone does a sex act that is **not** okay with you.



Grooming – When an adult tries to be friends with a child for sex acts.



Neglect – When someone does **not** look after you.

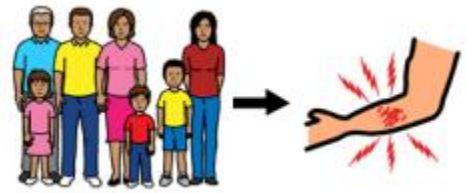


Emotional Abuse – When someone hurts you with words.



Suspected Child Abuse

If staff believe that a child has been hurt, they must tell someone straight away. If someone does not think you should tell anyone but you do not agree, you should still tell Child Protection.



Responding to a Disclosure of Abuse or Neglect

If a child says they have been hurt, the adult should stay calm and listen to the child. The adult should tell the child they believe them and that they did the right thing. The adult should tell them what will happen next. The adult should write an Incident Report.



The adult should not get angry, make promises that cannot be kept, start to cry or tell the child to say even more.

Where a Parent, Carer or Guardian Makes a Disclosure About a Staff Member

If a parent, carer or guardian says that their child has been hurt at Distinctive Options, staff should say that we have processes that will start straight away. Staff should complete an incident form with the guardian. The guardian should be told that information might need to be shared with management and/or authorities. The guardian should be told what the next steps will be.



Reporting Process

- If you think a child is in danger, you should write down some notes about this. You should talk with the coordinator and Executive Manager – Support Services.
- The coordinator and Executive Manager will decide who should be told.
- The coordinator and the Executive Manager will provide support to the child, their family, the person who made the report and the accused (if they are a staff member).
- Distinctive Options will make changes to make the service better.



Making a Report to Victoria Police

If a child is in serious danger, staff must call the police. Staff must also call the police if a child is hurt by a staff member.



Making a Report to Child Protection

If a child is in danger, staff should call Child Protection. Child Protection keep children safe from their families. If a child is in danger, staff must call Child Protection to get help.



Making a Report to Child FIRST

If a child is not in serious danger, staff can call Child FIRST (Child and Family Information, Referral and Support Team). Child FIRST will give support to the family to make their life better.



Confidentiality

Child Protection will keep your name a secret if you tell them about a child being hurt. They may give your name to someone if you agree to this or if a court tells them to.



Protection

If you think a child is being hurt by someone, you will not get in trouble for telling the police or Child Protection.



Telling Families

Abuse or Neglect in the Child's Home

If a child is being hurt by someone in their family, staff do **not** have to tell their family. They can go straight to the police or Child Protection.



Abuse or Neglect Outside the Child's Home

If a child is being hurt by someone outside their home, staff must tell their family straight away. Staff and the family can tell police or Child Protection together.



Offences

Failure to Disclose Offence

If staff think that a child has been hurt in a sexual way, they must tell the police or Child Protection. If they do not, they may go to jail.



Failure to Protect Offence

If staff think there is an adult who might hurt children in a sexual way, they must protect children from this adult. If they do not protect the child, they may go to jail.



Telling the NDIS Commission

We have to tell the NDIS Commission about serious incidents. A serious incident might be a child getting badly hurt or dying.



Ongoing Support

If you need support from Child Protection, staff can help. Staff can give support to the child and go to meetings.



Contacts



Child Protection Business Hours	1800 650 227
Child Protection After Hours	13 12 78
Child FIRST	1300 786 433
Office of the Child Safety Commissioner	8601 5884
Working With Children Check Unit	1300 652 879
Child Wise	9645 8911
Child Safe	9313 7913