

Putting Standard 8 into practice in your organisation

Physical and online
environments promote
safety and wellbeing while
minimising the opportunity
for children and young
people to be harmed





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Acknowledgements

The guidance on the Universal Principle for Aboriginal Cultural Safety in this resource has not been changed or amended from the *Interim compliance guidance for organisations*.

This guidance was originally developed with the valued cultural expertise and leadership of the Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre, and in consultation with Aboriginal organisations across the state. Their contribution was central to shaping the Universal Principle and the associated compliance indicators—both of which uphold the right of Aboriginal children and young people to grow up safe, with meaningful connections to culture, community and identity.

Accordingly, the Universal Principle and its compliance indicators have been carried into this resource as they were—without change, addition or removal—out of respect for the integrity of the original work and the leadership of Aboriginal community members in shaping it.

We acknowledge and thank the young artists from the Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre for developing the artwork featured throughout this guidance.

Disclaimer

This educational resource references key elements of the *Child and Youth Safe Organisations Act 2023*. However, it does not cover the full legislation and is **not** legal advice.

While every effort has been made to ensure accuracy, no responsibility is accepted for any errors or omissions. For complete and precise information, refer directly to the *Child and Youth Safe Organisations Act 2023*.

Before we begin

This resource is designed to support your organisation to embed Child and Youth Safe Standard 8. Guidance is organised under compliance indicators that explain what implementation can look like in organisations.



Compliance indicators are

- statements which, if followed by an organisation, indicate compliance with a Child and Youth Safe Standard.
- guides to help organisations understand what compliance might look like in practice.



Compliance indicators are not

- equally applicable or relevant to all organisations. It's important to remember that each organisation is unique. Some indicators may be more relevant than others—and they may be adapted or expanded on to better suit your organisation's needs
- the only way to demonstrate compliance—organisations may use additional or different approaches to uphold the Child and Youth Safe Standards and the Universal Principle for Aboriginal Cultural Safety.

Most of the artwork featured in this guidance comes from the *Interim compliance guidance for organisations* and was created by young Aboriginal Tasmanians from the Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre.



Standard 8 – Physical and online environments promote safety and wellbeing while minimising the opportunity for children and young people to be harmed



What it means

Everyone in the organisation plays a role in identifying and managing risks, and in creating welcoming physical and online spaces that help keep children and young people safe.



Why it matters

Unsafe or poorly monitored spaces—whether physical or online—can expose children and young people to significant risks, including abuse, neglect, bullying, or exploitation.



The value of getting it right

When environments are safe and supportive, children and young people feel protected, respected, and free to participate.

We know this because children and young people like Joe have told us:

"I like spaces with lots of windows that are really open and welcoming."



What compliance with Standard 8 looks like

The following compliance indicators illustrate how this Standard may be applied in practice in organisations.

It's important to remember that each organisation is unique. Some indicators may be more relevant than others—and they may be adapted or expanded on to better suit your organisation's needs.

Compliance Indicators

use correct terminology and language, acknowledge Traditional owners and demonstrate zero tolerance for racism and discrimination

Pages 6–7



The physical and online environments **show respect** for Aboriginal people.



look for and record risks, respond appropriately

Pages 8–9

Staff and volunteers **identify and mitigate** risks in online and physical environments without compromising a child's right to privacy, access to information, social connections and learning opportunities.



consider different types of technology, such as phones, websites, or applications

Pages 10–11

The **online environment** is used in accordance with the organisation's Code of Conduct and Child and Youth Safe Policy.



early identification and assessment of risks is key to prevention

Pages 12–13

Risk management plans consider risks posed by organisational settings, activities, and the physical environment.

someone who is involved with an organisation such as a contractor or hirer

Page 14



Organisations that contract facilities and services from **third parties** have procurement policies that ensure the safety of children and young people.

Reflect on risk factors for this Standard

- *No child-friendly cues*

Do spaces in the organisation feel welcoming, open, and are designed with children and young people in mind?

- *Online interactions are unchecked*

Are there clear guidelines or monitoring for staff interacting with children and young people online?

- *Children's rights and access is not respected*

Are risks managed through finding safe and empowering options for access for children and young people, instead of removing options?

- *Environments are not culturally safe*

Are there visible signs of cultural respect, inclusion, or acknowledgement of Country in the environment?

- *Third-party providers are not vetted*

Are contractors and venue partners vetted for child safety practices or provided clear expectations?

Don't know where to start?

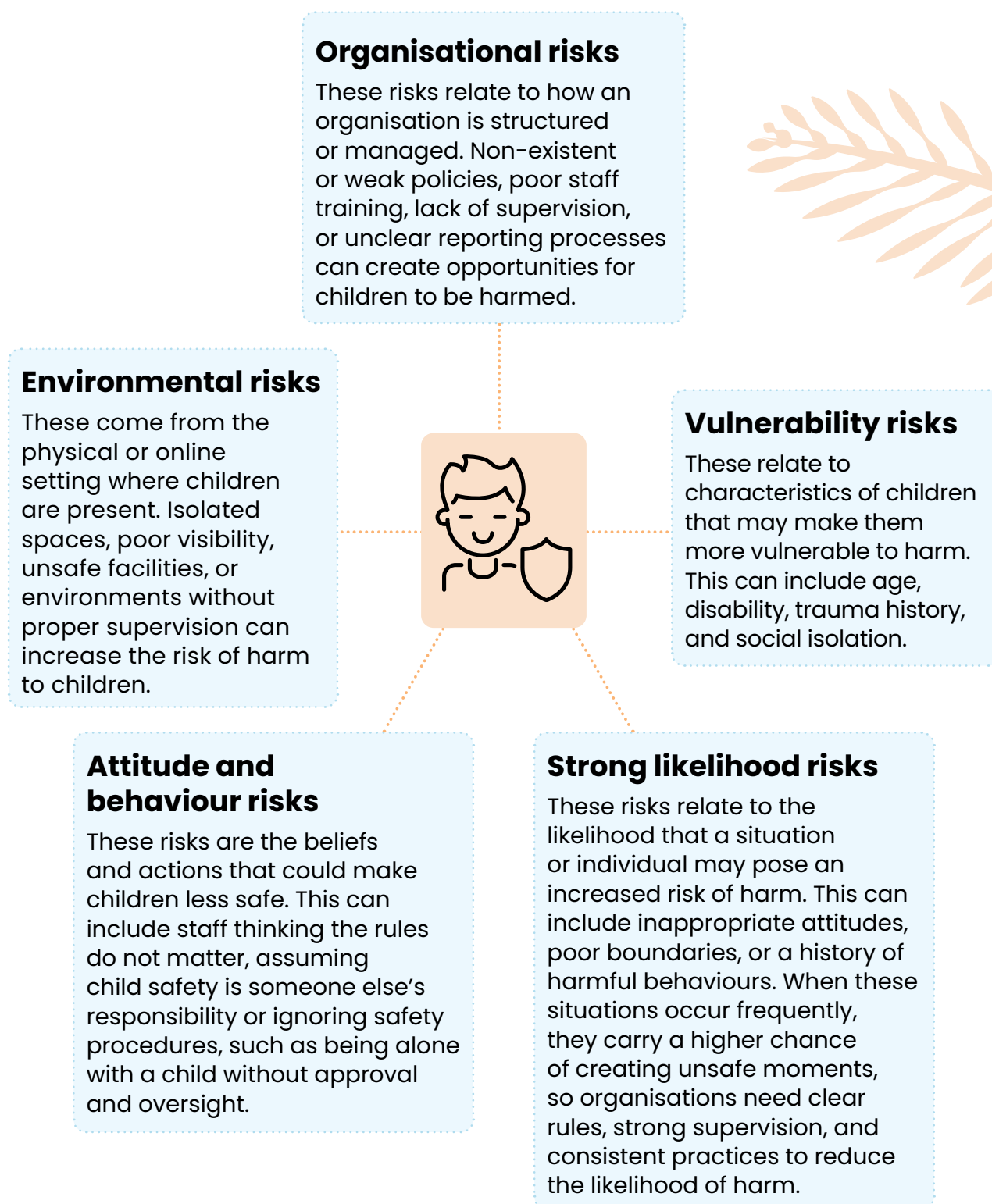
Reflect on the risks outlined above and your organisation's current practices. Consider beginning with this Standard by exploring the following focus areas:

- Physical and online environment risk identification and mitigation
- Risk management plans

pages 7–9

pages 12–13

There are five dimensions of risk that you should consider when developing your child safety risk management strategies.

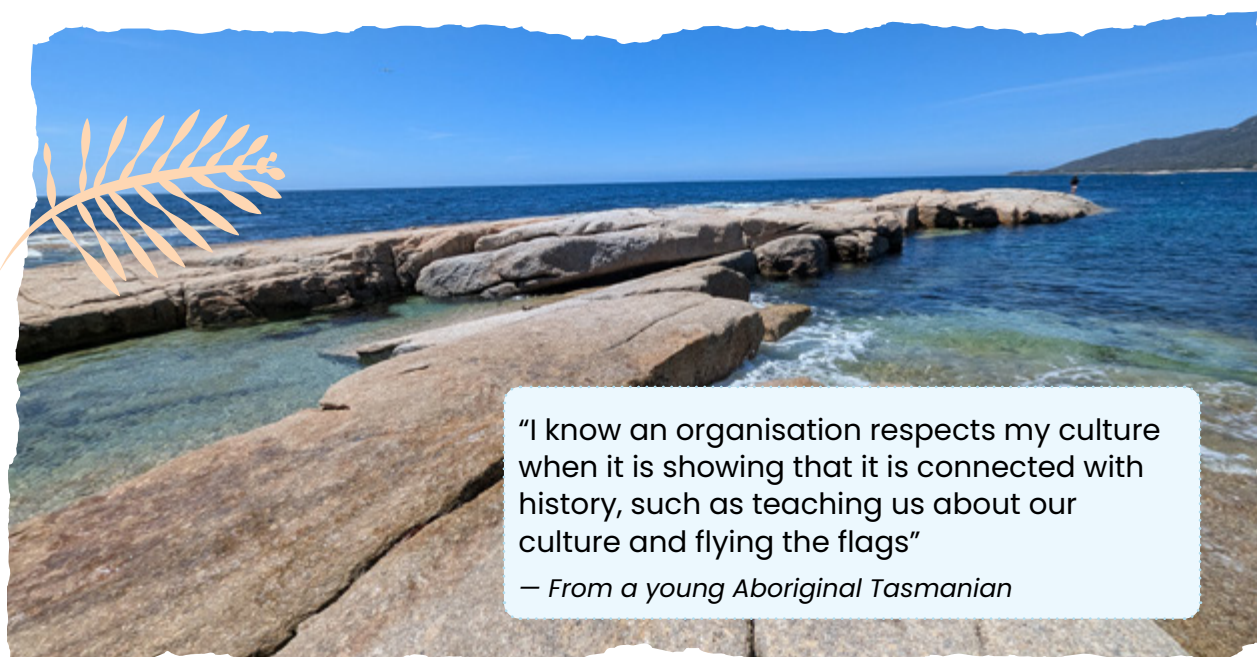




The physical and online environments show respect for Aboriginal people.

What it means

Aboriginal people generally feel more comfortable in Aboriginal community spaces. Organisations can support Aboriginal children to feel comfortable to engage with their service by displaying an Acknowledgement of Country, photos or posters of Aboriginal community events and local Aboriginal artworks in their physical and online environments.



In practice this looks like...

Acknowledgement of First Nations people as the Traditional Owners are included in the organisation's day-to-day communications (such as email signatures), formal documents, and on the website.

Aboriginal children are encouraged and supported to express their culture if they choose to.

Staff and volunteers actively encourage and uphold cultural safety, recognising it as a responsibility shared across all levels of the organisation.



Staff and volunteers identify and mitigate risks in online and physical environments without compromising a child's right to privacy, access to information, social connections and learning opportunities.

What it means

This means finding the right balance—protecting children without limiting their rights to privacy, connection, learning and access to information. It requires a thoughtful approach, as each situation is different. Risks should be individually assessed, considered and addressed so that safety measures do not unintentionally disadvantage or isolate children.

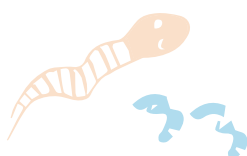
What are risks to children and young people in *physical environments*?

Risks in physical spaces can come from how a space is set up, who can access it, how it is supervised and what safety measures are in place.

Some examples are:

- hidden or isolated areas where children can be alone with adults
- poor lighting or places that cannot be easily seen (closed rooms with no windows)
- overnight camps or trips away
- unmonitored doors or gates
- not enough adult supervision during activities
- broken or unsafe equipment
- spaces that do not suit different ages or needs.

Identifying and managing these risks helps organisations make spaces safer and more supportive for children and young people.



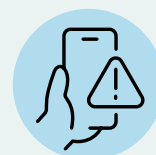
What are risks to children and young people in the *online environment*?

Children and young people can face significant risks online, like grooming, cyberbullying, seeing inappropriate content, or having their privacy invaded. They might be contacted by adults or peers in unsafe ways, be asked to share private information or photos, or fall for scams.

These risks can happen on social media, messaging apps, video calls or even learning platforms.

Some examples are:

- access to apps or sites that are not age appropriate
- private/direct contact with adults online
- unsupervised access to technology
- lack of education around cyberbullying, gaming, appropriate online communication
- not having someone to report online abuse to.



What does it mean to manage risks while still respecting children's rights to privacy, connection, learning and access to information?

It means looking for places where harm could happen and taking steps to stop it—but without taking away children's rights to privacy, learning, connection, or fun. It is about being alert and careful, not alarmist or unreasonable.

This might look like:

- **Physical spaces:** keeping clear lines of sight so children can be seen and supported
- **Online spaces:** choosing secure, appropriate software and setting age appropriate online rules
- **Supervision:** ensuring there are enough staff present when children are playing and making friends
- **Reporting:** providing simple ways for children to speak up, making sure they feel heard, and clearly sharing reporting policies and procedures.

A strong, **long-term** approach to managing risk should not mean stopping programs, services or activities for children and young people. Instead, it is about finding smart, practical ways to make these opportunities safer and more supportive—so children and young people can keep learning, connecting and thriving. However, if a risk cannot be reduced to a safe level, stopping the activity may be the right decision.

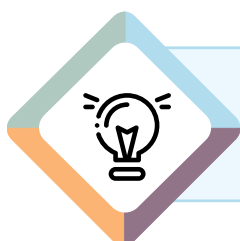
Why it matters

When your organisation manages risks in physical and online spaces, while respecting children's rights to privacy, connection and learning:

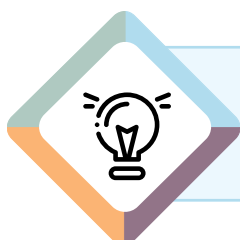
- spaces are safer, welcoming and suit different ages and needs
- children and young people have safe and secure, access to services and programs, without being overly restricted
- staff know how to practically identify and respond to risks in a timely manner.

When your organisation does not identify and manage risks well, children and young people can be placed at greater risk of harm and abuse, and can miss important opportunities to learn, play and grow.

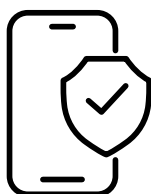
This should look like	This shouldn't look like
Putting up clear safety signs or cues in places like computer areas or play spaces.	Watching children so closely that it takes away their privacy or freedom.
Setting simple, clear rules for safe behaviour online and in person, while respecting children's privacy.	Stopping children from joining activities just because risks were not managed properly.
Giving children and staff clear ways to report risks or safety concerns and putting in place appropriate actions to prevent harm.	Not having clear ways for children to report problems or concerns.
Checking physical and online spaces often to spot and manage new risks.	Skipping safety checks, which can lead to hidden dangers or old safety rules that do not work anymore.



See resource: Assessing child safety risks in your organisation



See resource: Mitigating key child safety risks in your organisation



The online environment is used in accordance with the organisation's Code of Conduct and Child and Youth Safe Policy.

What it means

This means all online interactions—whether through social media, email, video calls, or websites—must follow your organisation's Code of Conduct and Child and Youth Safe Policy. Staff, volunteers, and anyone working with children must use safe practices that protect children's privacy and safety at all times.

Why it matters

When your organisation creates a safe online environment:

- children are protected from privacy breaches, harmful content and unsafe contact
- staff and volunteers know how to act safely and responsibly online
- families trust that children can learn and connect online without unnecessary risks.

When your organisation does not manage online risks well children are more likely to face harm, exploitation or exposure to unsafe content.

In practice this looks like...

Clear guidelines for online behaviour are outlined in the organisation's Code of Conduct and Child Safe Policy.

Personal and private information is handled carefully, with appropriate privacy settings in place across online platforms.

Online spaces, such as social media accounts, are used only for the purpose of engagement that respects children's privacy and promotes safety.

Children are encouraged to engage in online spaces safely and are educated on what is appropriate, with clear boundaries.

What you can do right now

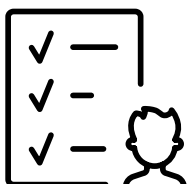
- **Set boundaries:** Establish clear guidelines for acceptable online communication with children (e.g. no one-on-one private messages, no sharing personal information).
- **Review policies:** Ensure your Code of Conduct and Child and Youth Safe Policy clearly address online conduct and child safety in digital spaces.
- **Share existing guidance:** Many organisations have existing information readily available that you can share with staff, volunteers, children and families, such as:
 - ◇ eSafety Commissioner
 - ◇ Project ROCKIT IRL
 - ◇ Daniel Morcombe Foundation
 - ◇ Alannah and Madeline Foundation
 - ◇ The Carly Ryan Foundation

What you can do next

- **Provide training:** Organise training for staff and volunteers on online safety, including how to manage online interactions with children, privacy, and how to report online risks or breaches.
- **Develop an incident response plan:** Create a clear plan for responding to any online incidents, such as breaches of privacy, inappropriate behaviour, or cyberbullying.



- **Ongoing reviews:** Regularly assess online practices and interactions, updating policies and guidelines as needed to stay current with new online risks or trends.



Risk management plans consider risks posed by organisational settings, activities and the physical environment.

A good risk management plan considers the following:



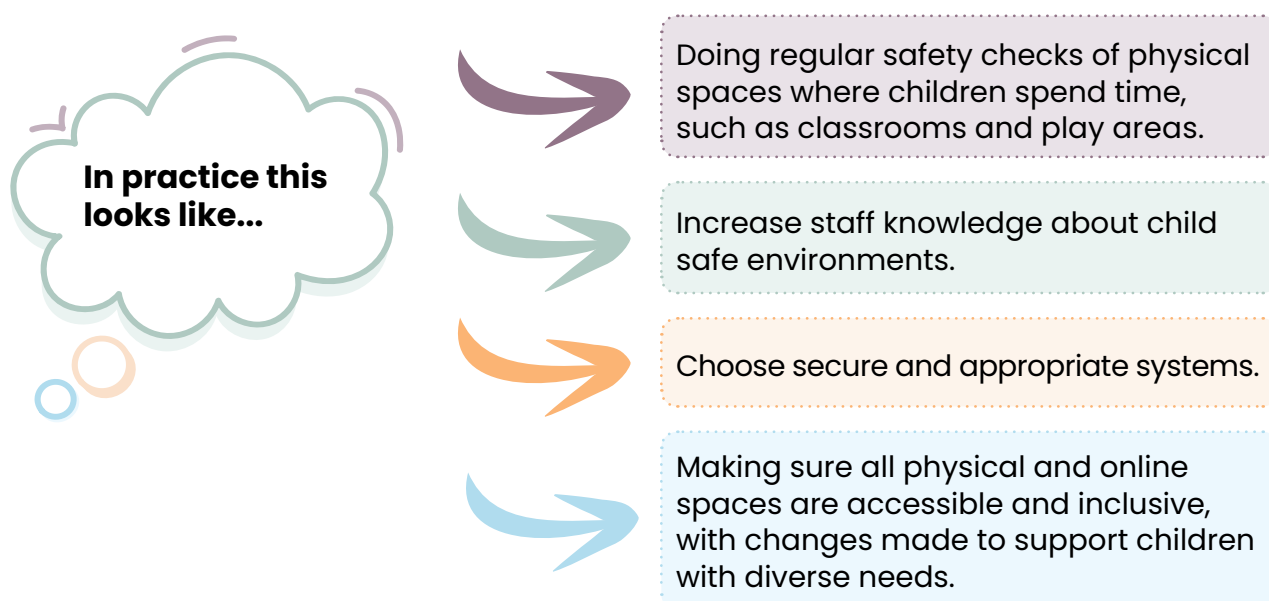
In short, **it is a proactive approach to creating a safe environment** by anticipating risks and managing them before they cause harm.

Why it matters

When your organisation has a strong risk management plan:

- children are safer and less likely to be harmed
- spaces stay safe and supportive for learning and play
- risks are found and managed before they can cause harm.

When your organisation does not manage risks well children may face harm or unsafe situations that could have been mitigated or avoided.



What you can do right now

- **Conduct a risk assessment:** Walk through your organisation's physical spaces to identify and address immediate risks (e.g. broken equipment, safety hazards, and blind spots).



- **Review activity plans:** Check that all planned activities are safe and well-supervised, and that any risks related to children's participation are mitigated.
- **Implement a reporting system:** Establish clear reporting channels for staff to flag any new risks or concerns about physical environments.

What you can do next

- **Create a formal risk management plan:** Draft or update a comprehensive plan that addresses risks related to physical and online spaces, activities, and settings.
- **Schedule regular reviews:** Set up a recurring schedule to review and update the risk management plan to account for changes in the environment or activities.
- **Set up safety guidelines:** Develop specific guidelines for managing risks in different environments, such as safe equipment use, supervision ratios, or safe interaction zones.
- **Communicate safety guidelines:** Share your organisation's safety guidelines with everyone and discuss them openly so all staff understand what they are and why they exist.



Organisations that contract facilities and services from third parties have procurement policies that ensure the safety of children and young people.

Procurement policies are the rules an organisation follows when buying goods or services from outside suppliers. These rules make sure the suppliers meet certain standards, like safety or quality, and that they align with the organisation's values.

When it comes to child safety, procurement policies should ensure that any third-party provider or contractors have the right checks in place, such as background checks for staff or safe environments for children. This helps protect children while the organisation is working with external services.

Why it matters

When your organisation checks and manages third-party contractors well:

- children stay safe around people who work for or with your organisation
- all adults working with children are vetted and follow safe practices
- families and communities can trust that child safety is always a priority.

When your organisation does not check and manage third-party contractors well children can be put at risk by unvetted staff or unsafe practices.

This should look like

Procurement policies require third-party providers to have child safety measures, including background checks for staff and contractors.

Organisations actively supervise contractors and service providers to ensure they are following child safety policies when interacting with children and young people.

Third-party contracts include clear child safety expectations, with regular checks to ensure compliance.

Risk assessments are conducted for third-party services, including potential risks to children in both physical and online environments.

This shouldn't look like

Assuming third-party providers automatically follow child safety standards without checking or requiring evidence.

Not having a backup plan or clear steps if a third-party service presents a risk to child safety.

Not setting boundaries for where third-party contractors can go or what they can do around children and young people.

Vague documentation or no formal requirement for child safety in third-party agreements.



Review existing contracts: Go through current third-party agreements to ensure they include child safety clauses and requirements.



Create a checklist: Develop a simple checklist that includes child safety requirements to be used in all procurement processes.

- **Inform third parties:** Notify current or potential third-party providers about your organisation's child safety expectations and policies.
- **Update procurement policies:** Revise or develop procurement policies to explicitly include child safety requirements and ensure these are applied consistently to all third-party contracts.
- **Provide training or briefings:** Offer child safety training or briefings for third-party providers who work with children and young people.



Checklist: Assessing child safety risks in your organisation

Go through each item and tick **yes**, **no** or **maybe**. Focus your efforts on the **no** and **maybe** boxes—these are areas that may need action. You can also add any other risks that are **unique to your organisation** or the children and young people you work with. This tool is to help you spot and address potential gaps in your approach to child safety.

1. Organisational risk

Yes

Maybe

No

Risks linked to how your organisation works, its culture and how leaders, staff and volunteers act.

Staff and volunteers receive training on child abuse or how to spot signs of harm.

☐☐☐

There are clear child safety policies and procedures.

☐☐☐

There are risk management plans for child safety.

☐☐☐

There is a child-safe Code of Conduct for staff and volunteers.

☐☐☐

Children and young people share ideas and can be part of decisions that affect them.

☐☐☐

Parents, carers and the community are provided with clear information how the organisation keeps children safe.

☐☐☐

There is a clear way to report worries or get help for safety concerns.

☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐

2. Vulnerability risk

Yes

Maybe

No

Risks linked to children who may be more at risk of harm and need extra support.

The organisation has updated policies and procedures on how to support children with diverse needs. (Diverse needs may include disabilities, LGBTIQ+, culturally diverse backgrounds, victim-survivors, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, or children in out-of-home care settings and rural areas).

☐☐☐☐☐☐

3. Environmental risk

Risks linked to physical and online spaces.

The organisation actively demonstrates recognition or celebration of Aboriginal people in physical or online spaces.

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Physical spaces are well maintained and there are clear rules for high-risk spaces (like change rooms or vehicles).

☐☐☐

Staff receive training to confidently provide safe environments, and supervision ratios are clearly defined and consistently followed.

☐☐☐

Visitors are screened and there is a clear sign-in and sign-out process for children and families.

☐☐☐

Staff and volunteers do not speak privately with children online.

☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐

4. Attitude and behaviour risk

Yes

Maybe

No

Risks linked to how adults in the organisation think or act.

Adults demonstrate zero tolerance for racism and discrimination.

☐☐☐

Adults demonstrate responsibility and accountability for maintaining a child safe environment and responding appropriately to reports of child abuse and harm.

☐☐☐

Adults trust children's stories about harm and do not ignore it.

☐☐☐

Adults understand that keeping children safe is everyone's responsibility.

☐☐☐

Adults willingly participate in child safety training.

☐☐☐

Adults avoid inappropriate jokes or conversations around children.

☐☐☐

Adults avoid unsupervised time with children.

☐☐☐

Adults prioritise reporting concerns about child safety over reputational and relational concerns.

☐☐☐

Adults take action to address peer-on-peer bullying and harm.

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5. Strong likelihood risks

Yes

Maybe

No

Risks linked to how likely is the risk to occur in the organisations day-to-day environment.

Adults and children are never in one-on-one environments. Such as in vehicles or changing rooms.

☐☐☐

Adults do not have physical contact with children during activities.

☐☐☐

Adults receive training, supervision and debriefing to appropriately handle high-stress environments.

☐☐☐

Children do not have unsupervised access to digital devices.

☐☐☐

There are clear guidelines on the maximum hours adults should work and this is consistently followed in practice.

☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐



Mitigating key child safety risks in your organisation (Example)

Use your answers to the checklist in the previous section to take a closer look at the top five risks you identified, and list mitigation strategies, in this work sheet.

Example of how to describe your risk and mitigation strategies:	
Risk identified:	There are no clear and documented processes for how to report concerns about child harm and abuse, including complaints and how to access support.
Risk rating:	☐ High – This risk needs urgent attention and/or safety interventions put in place. ☐ Medium – This risk needs attention and/or policy interventions put in place. ☐ Low – This risk can be managed by regular policies, procedures, and processes.
How do I know this is a risk in my organisation?	• There is no information about types of harm and common signs and reporting pathways. • Staff and volunteers are not clear about their reporting obligations. • Children, young people, parents, carers, and the community are unsure how to report a complaint or concern.
What can I do to mitigate this risk?	• Establish reporting procedures. • Proactively supply information about types of harm and common signs. • Make posters about how to report concerns and raise complaints. • Have regular conversations with staff about their reporting obligations.

Example of how to describe your risk and mitigation strategies:	
How will these changes be shared throughout the organisation?	• Share reporting procedures with everyone involved in the organisation. • Upload reporting procedure to the organisation's website. • Include information about types of harm and common signs through team-level meetings. • Included updated information in staff training and induction packs. • Display posters throughout the organisation, include them in newsletters and post on multimedia channels. • Verbally check in with staff.
How will we know if it has worked?	• Everyone in our organisation knows how to report a complaint or concern. • Staff and volunteers know their reporting obligations and understand exactly what actions to take. • The organisation provides plain English information that explains different types of harm and the common signs to look for.

Risk Mitigation Plan (Template)

Risk identified:	<i>[Populate with your risk].</i>
Risk rating:	☐ High – This risk needs urgent attention and/or safety interventions put in place. ☐ Medium – This risk needs attention and/or policy interventions put in place. ☐ Low – This risk can be managed by regular policies, procedures, and processes.
How do I know this is a risk in my organisation?	<i>[List the key evidence for the risk]</i>
What can I do to mitigate this risk?	<i>[List ways to reduce or eliminate the risk].</i>
How will these changes be shared throughout the organisation?	<i>[List how changes will be communicated].</i>
How will we know if it has worked?	<i>[Write down how the organisation measures its success].</i>

