



Working with Children Policy and Procedures

PURPOSE AND SCOPE

Easy iCare Pty Ltd recognises the right of participants to feel safe and to live in an environment where they are protected from assault, neglect, exploitation or any other form of abuse. This policy specifically looks at the requirements when working with participants under the age of 18 years.

To ensure that Easy iCare Pty Ltd undertakes a Zero Tolerance approach as described in the Disability Workers Code of Conduct.

POLICY

Easy iCare Pty Ltd will encourage and support any person who has witnessed abuse of a service user or, who suspects that abuse has occurred, to make a report and be confident of doing so without fear of retribution.

Easy iCare Pty Ltd as a mandatory reporter is required to report any indicators.

Easy iCare Pty Ltd acknowledges that prevention is the best protection from abuse and neglect and recognises the duty of care obligations to implement prevention strategies.

It is the legislative policy that staff engaged in working with children must have the required state checks. These checks must be renewed every five years as per the legislation. Easy iCare Pty Ltd will address the requirements under the Child Safe Standards (2016)

Staff must undergo the NDIS worker screening process prior to employment. This is recorded in their personal file.

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Author/Reviewer	Kerry Bolton (Safety & Compliance Manager)		
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PROCEDURE

When to Report an Abusive Situation

It is important to always search for the cause of a change in a participant's behaviour or unexplained physical symptoms. If a participant shows one or more of the possible signs of abuse (as listed below), it does not automatically mean she or he is being abused, but it must be reported.

Manager will then report concerns for the safety or welfare of a child, to report concerns that are life threatening, ring Victoria Police on 000 or concerns about the immediate safety of a child after hours, call the After Hours Child Protection Emergency Service on 13 12 78.

If the Manager has significant concerns for the wellbeing of the child, but does not believe they are at risk of significant harm, and where the safety of the child will not be compromised, a referral to Child FIRST or The Orange Door may be considered.

Defining Child Maltreatment, abuse and neglect

Child abuse and neglect refers to any behaviour by parents, caregivers, other adults or older adolescents that is outside the norms of conduct and entails a substantial risk of causing physical or emotional harm to a child or young person. Such behaviours may be intentional or unintentional and can include acts of omission (i.e. neglect) and commission (i.e. abuse).

Physical Abuse

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Signs & Symptoms: Bruising, lacerations, welts, rashes, broken or healing bones, burns, weight loss, facial swelling, missing teeth, pain or restricted movements, crying, acting fearful, agitation, drowsiness, hair loss and / or poor physical well-being.

Causes: Hitting, slapping, pushing, punching and / or burning, which entails an incident that is non-accidental resulting in pain or injury.

Psychological / Emotional Abuse

Signs & Symptoms: Loss of interest in self-care, helplessness, withdrawn, apathy, insomnia, fearfulness, reluctant to communicate openly, chooses not to maintain eye contact, paranoia and confusion.

Causes: Intimidation, humiliation, harassment, threatening, sleep deprivation, withholding affection, and / or not allowing the person to maintain their own decision-making powers, which leads to a pattern repeated over time.

Financial Abuse

Signs & Symptoms: Unpaid accounts, withholding funds, loss of jewellery and/or personal belongings, removal of cash from wallet or purse, agitated when discussing money, not providing money for outings and personal items ,and / or a person who takes over the care of someone's money without permission

Causes: Misuse of person's money, valuables or property, forced changes to legal documents (such as a "will") denying access to or control of personal funds, stealing, fraud, forgery, embezzlement, misuse of power of attorney & taking away decision making powers of a person.

Sexual Abuse

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Signs & Symptoms: Unexplained sexual transmitted disease, vaginal/anal bleeding, fearful of certain people or places, bruising to genital areas inner thigh or around breasts, anxiety, torn or bloody underclothes, difficult in walking or sitting, change in sleep pattern and repeating night mares.

Causes: Rape (penetration and/or oral-genital contact), interest in older person's bodies, inappropriate comments and sexual references, inappropriate (possible painful) administration of enemas or genital cleansing, indecent assault, sexual harassment which is mainly about violence and power over another person, rather than sexual pleasure.

Neglect

Signs & Symptoms: Poor hygiene or personal care, unkempt appearance, lack of personal items, absence of health aids, weight loss, agitation, inappropriate clothing and / or lack of food.

Cause: The intentional failure to provide basic life necessities.

Social Abuse

Signs & Symptoms: Sadness & grief because people are not visiting, anxiety after a certain person's visit, withdrawal, low self-esteem, appearing ashamed, passivity, and / or listlessness.

Causes: Prevention of people having contact with friends or family and preventing access to social activities.

Strategies to identify and reduce or remove risks of child abuse

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Easy iCare Pty Ltd recognises that creating a child safe organisation begins with a clear understanding of the potential risks to children in an organisation's setting – what could go wrong and what you can do to reduce or remove these risks.

To reduce the likelihood of harm, Easy iCare Pty Ltd will consider, define and taken action against its organisational risks.

This includes:

- thinking about the organisation, its activities and the services it provides to children
- planning how to make activities as safe as possible
- being proactive to reduce the likelihood of risks.

A report must be made if:

- A participant shows a change in behaviour or mood that may indicate they are being abused.
- You observe someone behaving towards a participant in a way that makes you feel uncomfortable.
- A participant tells you that they are being abused by another person.
- A person tells you that they are abusing a participant.
- A participant or visitor tells you that they have observed abusive acts.
- A participant's immediate safety is compromised and / or,
- The participant is partaking in any risk-taking activity that is illegal or extreme in nature or poses a high risk to their safety, or the safety of somebody else.
- You observe an action or inaction that may be considered abusive.
- You suspect or have any reason to believe a participant is being abused

Failure to report an abusive situation may result in a Criminal Offence.

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RELATED DOCUMENTS

- Incident Form
- Code of Ethics and Conduct Form
- Participant Notes
- Risk Management Form
- Policies and Procedures

REFERENCES

- Victorian Children, Youth and Families Act 2005
- Victorian Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005
- Victorian Child Wellbeing and Safety Regulations (Reportable Conduct Scheme) 2017
- Victorian Commission for Children and Young People Act 2012
- Victorian Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010
- Victorian Working With Children Act 2005
- Victorian Working With Children (Reportable Conduct) Regulations 2016
- Victorian Working with Children Amendment Act 2016 to be repealed August 2018
- Victorian Children Legislation Amendment (Reportable Conduct) Act 2017 to be repealed September 2018
- Victorian Children Legislation Amendment (Information Sharing) Act 2018
- Privacy Act (1988)
- Victorian Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014
- Victorian Personal Safety Intervention Orders Act 2010
- United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child 1989
- The National Framework for protecting Australia's Children
- NDIS (Quality and Safeguards) Commission 2018
- NDIS (Practice Standards - Worker Screening) Rules 2018
- Children and Young People (Care and Protection) Act 1998

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