

Preserving Their Innocence:

Standards for Preventing Child Sexual Abuse



In collaboration with the
NJ Partnership to Prevent Child Sexual Abuse and
the Enough Abuse Campaign

DISCLAIMER

Preserving Their Innocence: Standards for Preventing Child Sexual Abuse

In 2012, Prevent Child Abuse–New Jersey in collaboration with NJ Partnership to Prevent Child Sexual Abuse and the Enough Abuse Campaign, presented six Sexual Abuse Safe–Child Standards as a tool for guiding youth–serving organizations in the development and implementation of preventative policies and procedures. As we continue our endeavors to preserve the innocence of children, we have updated the Standards to include a seventh standard that addresses practices for transporting children and youth. Additionally, sample policies and procedures for youth–serving organizations, religious entities, and private practitioners are now included for reference as they work to serve and protect our children. While there is no guarantee that these Standards and associated policies and procedures will prevent the occurrence of child sexual abuse, by implementing such Standards and policies and procedures, an organization can minimize the risks of the occurrence of such incidents. PCA–NJ assumes no liability of any kind resulting from the use or implementation of these Standards.

November 29, 2012– “Sexual Abuse Safe-Child Standards”

Rev. April 1, 2025– “Preserving Their Innocence: Standards for Preventing Child Sexual Abuse”

Table of Contents

| | |
|--|----|
| Introduction | 3 |
| Standard 1: Analyze risk of harm and minimize risk | 5 |
| Standard 2: Post a clear and accessible child–safe policy | 7 |
| Standard 3: Develop codes of conduct for adults and children | 8 |
| Standard 4: Recruit and hire suitable employees and volunteers | 11 |
| Standard 5: Educate staff and volunteers about the risk of sexual abuse | 17 |
| Standard 6: Report and respond appropriately to suspected abuse and neglect | 18 |
| Standard 7: Establish policies that clearly address practices for transporting youth | 20 |
| Addendum: Contains all sample policies referenced throughout standards | 23 |
| Sample Child–Safe Policy for Youth Serving Organizations | 24 |
| Sample Child–Safe Policy for Religious Organizations | 25 |
| Sample Code of Conduct for Youth–Serving Organizations | 26 |
| DCF Physical & Behavioral Indicators of Child Abuse & Neglect, English version | 27 |
| DCF Physical & Behavioral Indicators of Child Abuse & Neglect, Spanish version | 28 |
| Sample Child Abuse Prevention Training Policy | 29 |
| Sample Training Acknowledgement Form | 30 |
| Sample Child Abuse and Neglect Reporting Policy | 31 |
| Sample Transportation Policy | 32 |

Introduction

Public awareness of institutional child sexual abuse continues to grow, and we are constantly learning more about the lasting effects that sexual abuse has on children. Institutional child sexual abuse can be associated with several widespread impacts on the physical, mental, social, and economic wellbeing of victims and survivors, and research indicates that a significant percentage of all cases of child sexual abuse occur through youth-serving organizations, including schools, churches, sports clubs, and others.

If we hope to end child sexual abuse, we need to engage youth-serving organizations as leaders in the prevention effort to help them become places where policies and practices at every level better protect children in their care. Organizations in New Jersey serving youth, share in the responsibility to take reasonable, necessary, and appropriate steps to protect youth from the risk of child sexual abuse while they are under the care or supervision of employees or volunteers. To that end, we have outlined a series of policy and procedural actions that organizations which serve youth should take to protect children from the risk of child sexual abuse. The framework described below is intended to help organizations develop a comprehensive approach to protecting children from harm and to ensure that proper reporting is done, should a case of abuse occur.

It is critical to recognize that each of the seven (7) standards outlined below can and should be tailored to the size and specific characteristics of each organization. Each step described in this document establishes a minimum requirement that organizations must meet to demonstrate that appropriate steps have been taken to establish a safe environment for children.



The steps also include suggested “guidelines to achieve compliance” to assist organizations in designing and implementing this set of standards. The guidelines for compliance provide organizations with practical examples of steps they can take to implement the standards. The guidelines for compliance may also be useful to measure and audit the child-safe practices of organizations. They can assist organizations in reviewing and evaluating current practices and identifying goals for development and provide a basis for accountability if practices fall below the specified standards. Although no policy or procedure can guarantee a 100% “child safe environment,” these standards promote child safety and well-being while reducing the risk of child sexual abuse to children and youth. By putting these standards into practice, everyone will have clearer guidelines about their own behavior around children and on what to do if they notice or are told about inappropriate behavior by others. In addition, by establishing child-safe standards, organizations may deter those who would wish to abuse children from joining the organization.

The standards recognize New Jersey’s existing laws related to mandated reporting of child abuse and neglect for every individual in the State: <https://www.nj.gov/dcf/reporting/how/>. The standards also recognize the relevant laws and regulations related to the conducting of background checks for youth serving organizations (YSO) in New Jersey.

See Background Checks for Youth Serving Nonprofits in New Jersey:

An Overview and Considerations, available at [Background-Checks-in-NJ-Overview-0724.pdf](#).

Preserving Their Innocence: *Standards for Preventing Child Sexual Abuse*

Purpose: To promote the well-being of youth in contact with public and private organizations and protect them from child sexual abuse. In the context of creating a safe environment for children, the Standards require organizations to identify, assess and take steps to minimize the risk of sexual abuse to children because of the action or inaction of an employee, volunteer, or another child.

Standard 1: *Analyze risk of harm and minimize that risk.*

Each organization should develop and implement a “risk management strategy” that analyzes the potential for child sexual abuse within their environment and take steps to minimize the risk of sexual abuse through their programs, staff, volunteers, and facilities. It includes a review of existing child protection policies and practices to determine how child-safe and child-friendly the organization is and the development of new strategies to minimize and prevent the risk of child sexual abuse from ever happening to children.

Organizations can utilize the following guidelines to identify the settings in which children are most at risk of sexual abuse, and to minimize the risk in those settings:

1. Employees and volunteers of the organization should be aware of child development and how child sexual abuse can occur and be detected within an organization.
2. A “child safety review” should identify the organization’s strengths and weaknesses relating to the risk of child sexual abuse. The key programs and services provided to children by the organization should be identified. An assessment should be made of the risk related to child sexual abuse for each program. Issues such as sources of, and reasons for, potential risks of child sexual abuse of children should be examined. Potential consequences and existing controls also should be identified.
3. Once high-risk situations have been identified, the organization should develop a risk-management plan that minimizes the risk of such situations or relationships occurring. This includes situations which might lead to false, malicious, or mistaken accusations of child sexual abuse.

According to Safe Kids Thrive (2025), the following questions should be considered when assessing risk:

- What is the nature of the contact between the employee/volunteer and the child(ren)/youth?
 - What is the duration and frequency of the contact?
 - In what physical locations will the contact take place?
 - Is the contact monitored, supervised, or unsupervised?
- What are the ages and vulnerabilities of the children being served?
 - Will other adults be in the same area?
- What is the potential for the employee/volunteer to be alone with the child(ren)/youth and unseen?

Safe Kids Thrive also recommends that agency positions (e.g., supervisor, direct care, and transportation staff, etc.) be assigned a risk designation, which could be listed in the job description. Risk designations are as follows:

- High: Expected unsupervised/unmonitored interaction with children.
- Moderate: Potential unsupervised/unmonitored interaction with children.
- Low: Exclusively supervised/monitored interaction, or no potential contact with children.



Standard 2:

Post a clear and accessible child-safe policy.

The organization should develop and post a “child–safe environment policy” that outlines its commitment to protecting children from child sexual abuse.

What is a child–safe environment policy? It is a clear statement of intent that demonstrates to a child’s parents and to the broader community an organization’s commitment to safeguard children from child sexual abuse and makes clear to all what is required in relation to the protection of children. It helps to create a safe and positive environment for children to promote children’s well–being and to show that the organization is taking its responsibility of care seriously.



Sample Child–Safe Policy Statement

This organization (insert name) is committed to the safety and well-being of all children and youth accessing our services. We have taken steps to educate our staff about the risks related to child sexual abuse, instituted policies and practices designed to protect children from the risk of child sexual abuse and trained our staff and volunteers about proper reporting requirements.



These guidelines provide clear examples of steps that an organization can take to post a clear and accessible child–safe policy.

- The organization should have a policy that indicates the organization’s commitment to protecting children in their care from child sexual abuse;
- The policy should be written in a clear and easily understandable way;
- The policy should be publicized, promoted, and distributed widely;
- The policy should be approved and endorsed by the organization’s governing authority;
- All employees and volunteers should be made aware of and have had the opportunity to read the policy and sign an acknowledgement form

Employees and volunteers should be required to sign a written statement indicating they have read the policy. The signed acknowledgement should be retained in the employee's or volunteer's personnel file, and a copy should be retained by the individual.

Parents, caregivers, and children (where appropriate) in the organization should be made aware of the policy and should be able to access a copy.

**Click on the icons below to access sample child-safe policies for
Youth-serving organizations
Religious organizations
DCF Physical and Behavioral Indicators of Child Abuse and Neglect**
(Spanish version is also available in Addendum)



Standard 3: *Develop codes of conduct for adults and children.*

The organization should have a code of conduct that specifies standards of conduct and care when working and interacting with children who participate in the organization's programs, activities, or care. The organization should also have a code of conduct to address appropriate behavior between children. These codes of conduct should set out professional boundaries, ethical behavior, and unacceptable behavior.

A code of conduct should include a straightforward definition of sexual abuse, and a guide of dos and don'ts to assist staff and volunteers to conduct their work professionally and effectively. Codes of conduct help prevent child sexual abuse, especially where one party is in a position of power or influence over the other by virtue of their work or the nature of their activity. By setting a clear benchmark of acceptable standards of conduct and care, a code of conduct can promote safe, positive, and encouraging environments. A code of conduct can minimize opportunities for sexual abuse and help to prevent unfounded allegations. In this way, codes of conduct help protect children and young people as well as employees and volunteers. The code of conduct is a brief, clear document that covers issues such as: physical contact, confidentiality, toilet and bathing arrangements, favoritism and "special" relationships and training.

These guidelines provide clear examples of steps that an organization can take to develop an adequate code of conduct for adults and children designed to minimize the occurrence of sexual abuse.

Establishing a Code of Conduct:

Include a definition of sexual abuse. One commonly accepted definition, from the APSAC Handbook of Child Maltreatment, is as follows: “Child sexual abuse involves any sexual activity with a child where consent is not or cannot be given. This includes sexual contact that is accomplished by force or threat of force, regardless of the age of the participants, and all sexual contact between an adult and a child, regardless of whether there is deception, or the child understands the sexual nature of the activity. Sexual contact between an older and a younger child also can be abusive if there is a significant disparity in age, development, or size, rendering the younger child incapable of giving informed consent. The sexually abusive acts may include sexual penetration, sexual touching, or non-contact sexual acts such as exposure or voyeurism.”

Clearly address everyone within the organization, including but not limited to:

- Existing employees, members or volunteers who are currently occupying or acting in identified positions.
- All persons seeking paid employment, membership, or voluntary work with the organization in identified positions, regardless of whether they are existing employees, members, or volunteers.
- Independent contractors, agency staff, consultants, apprentices, trainees, and students on placement who will undertake certain prescribed functions.

Identify expected and acceptable behaviors, for example:

- Include statements about the responsibility of adults and children to treat one another with dignity, respect, sensitivity, and fairness.



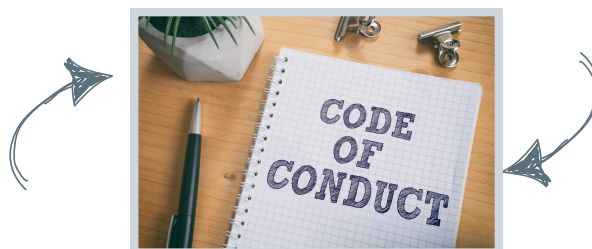
Identify unacceptable behaviors and high risk behaviors, for example:

- Unwarranted, unwanted, and/or inappropriate touching of a child;
- Bullying or harassment of a child;
- Inappropriate contact or relationships between employees/volunteers and children within the organization;
- Management of situations where adults are alone with children.
- Inappropriate communication between youth and staff in-person or via technology (e.g., phone, text, apps, online platforms, social media, and gaming platforms etc.).
- Taking or using photos of children without parental consent.

Codes of conduct should be made widely available, published, and communicated to individuals identified above

- All procedures should be clear, accessible, and transparent.
- All employees and volunteers (where practicable with respect to volunteers) should be required to acknowledge and sign the code of conduct. By signing the code, employees and volunteers confirm their obligation to apply the code to their work conduct within the organization. The signed code of conduct should be included on their staff record or personnel file (where applicable).
- Codes of conduct should reflect the unique values and program activities of the organization.
- A code of conduct should be linked to performance management of employees and volunteers.
- Members of the organization should be made aware of their duty to raise concerns about the behavior of employees, managers, volunteers, children, or others that may be harmful to children, without prejudice to their own position.
- Parents and caregivers should be encouraged to raise any concerns about the behavior of employees, managers, volunteers, children, or others that may be harmful to children, and expect to be listened to and supported.
- All concerns should be reported to the program supervisor or the designated safety officer.

Click on the icon below to access a sample Code of Conduct.



Standard 4:

Recruit and hire suitable employees and volunteers.

The organization should take all reasonable steps to ensure that it engages the most suitable and appropriate people to work and volunteer with children, using a range of screening and hiring measures. Such measures aim to minimize the likelihood of engaging (or retaining) people who are unsuitable to work with children.

A criminal history report should be obtained as part of an organization's screening process of an applicant. Organizations are required to ensure that the criminal history information is addressed in accordance with state, federal, and local laws. Where criminal history assessments are required by law, the organization must ensure that a satisfactory criminal history assessment is conducted for all persons undertaking prescribed functions at agency-defined intervals up to a maximum period of three (3) years.

The organization has a duty of care to take all reasonable steps to protect children from harm. Choosing suitable employees and volunteers is part of fulfilling the duty of an organization to act diligently and prudently to prevent actions and behavior that would be harmful to children. It is important that the organization engages the best possible people to work with children and who are suited to the specific role they are undertaking. Positions subject to careful screening should include:

- Staff or volunteers with regular contact with children or working near children on a regular basis.
- Supervisors or managers of persons in positions requiring or involving regular contact with children or working near children on a regular basis.
- Staff or volunteers with access to records relating to children.



People who work with children may be either employees or volunteers. Volunteers play a significant role in many organizations in New Jersey, providing services and strengthening communities. Most volunteers are genuine, caring, helping people who want to do what is best for children and their communities. A small number of people who seek to work with children in a paid or voluntary capacity pose a risk of harm to children. It is possible to minimize the risks and to prevent harm by putting safeguards in place. These actions will help to deter unsuitable applicants/child abusers from applying for employment or volunteer work with the organization.

Background checking, screening, and risk assessment during the recruitment of employees and volunteers are important measures within organizations' policies and practices for developing child-safe organizations. The three (3) key terms – background checking, screening, and risk-assessment – are often used interchangeably but refer to different concepts and processes.

Screening, in the context of minimizing the risk of harm to children in their dealings with organizations, refers to the combined process of background checking, risk assessment and decision-making concerning acceptance/exclusion of persons in areas of child related employment/volunteering. To screen and assess employees and volunteers, organizations may:

- undertake face-to-face interviews
- confirm educational status
- review reference checks
- conduct criminal history assessments
- undertake other background checks (e.g., psychological testing, on the job observation)



Background Checking involves obtaining information about potential employees and volunteers, on the basis that the information is deemed relevant to working in a child-related area. The information gathered may include details concerning previous employment and relevant experience; verification of qualifications and professional registration; criminal history information; thorough reference checks; and work history reports.

In the area of child protection, risk assessment refers to a process of evaluating the information received to reach a decision about the risk of harm a person may pose to children. Some roles present higher levels of risk to children, based on the nature of the work.

Some screening practices may also be used for ongoing monitoring purposes of existing employees and volunteers (e.g., obtaining criminal history reports or on the job observation). Another measure to reduce risk of harm to children is to use probationary periods for new employees and volunteers to assess their suitability for specific positions, roles, or duties.

Face-to-Face Interviews

Interviews may include behavior-based questions and open questions that invite explanations rather than a yes/no response (e.g., why do you want to work with children?). It is recommended that one of the interviewers is a designated staff position who has undergone training about child sexual abuse and who is familiar with issues of child protection.

Conduct Reference Checks

Relevant references can help determine when individuals present a risk of harm to children or are unsuitable to work with children. A structured reference check is to be undertaken as part of any selection process for recommended applicants who are not currently employees or volunteers of the organization. It is recommended that information on the applicant's suitability to work with children is sought from a minimum of two (2) references. One reference should be the applicant's current supervisor unless acceptable reasons are provided for not contacting that person. If the applicant is not working, the applicant's most recent supervisor should be listed as the reference. If the applicant has never been employed, the applicant may provide the contact details of persons who are able to provide reliable character references.

A suggested question to ask such references regarding the applicant's desire to work with children is: "to your knowledge is there any aspect of the applicant's behavior, actions or activities that would make them unsuitable for working with children?"

In some cases, it may be necessary for organizations to undertake follow up with references to establish confidence in the applicant.

Criminal History Assessments

Several New Jersey laws either require or permit criminal history background checks.

For example:

Criminal history background checks are required for:

- Employees of schools under the supervision of the NJDOE (N.J.S.A. 18A:6-7.1)
- Staff members of residential childcare facilities regulated by the NJDCF (N.J.S.A. 30:4C-27.16 et seq and N.J.S.A. 53:1-20.9d)
- Employees and volunteers aged 18 and up of childcare centers licensed by the NJDCF (N.J.S.A. 30:5B-6.10 et seq)
- Staff members of adoption agencies regulated by NJDCF (N.J.S.A. 9:3-40:2 et seq and 53:1-20.9d)
- Employees employed by an agency under a contract with the NJ Division of Developmental Disabilities (N.J.S.A. 30:6D-63 et seq)
- Employees of NJ State institutions or facilities for the mentally ill or developmentally disabled (N.J.S.A. 30:4-3.4 et seq. and N.J.S.A. 53:1-20.8)
- Licensed health care professionals (N.J.S.A. 45:1-28 et seq)
- Nurses' aides in long-term care facilities, personal care assistants in assisted living facilities (N.J.S.A. 26:2H-83 et seq., N.J.S.A. 45:11-24:3 et seq.)

Criminal history background checks are permissible for:

- Volunteers at schools under the supervision of the NJDOE (N.J.S.A. 18A:6-7.1)
- Prospective and current employees and volunteers of nonprofit YSO's that
 - (1) are exempt from federal income taxes,
 - (2) are in good standing with their annual report filings in NJ, and
 - (3) provide recreational, cultural, charitable, social or other activities or services for persons under 18 (N.J.S.A. 15A:3A-1 et seq)
- Employees of nonpublic schools, K-12 (N.J.S.A. 18A:6 - 4.13)
- Employees or volunteers of an organization, for purposes of determining a person's qualifications (N.J.S.A. 53:1-20:6 and N.J.A.C. 13:59-1 et seq.)

In addition, a youth-serving organization may not knowingly use the services of a Megan's Law sex offender (N.J.S.A. 2C:7- 22 et seq.)

**(This list is not intended to be exhaustive,
and you should consult an attorney to get up-to-date legal advice.)**

To prevent unnecessary intrusion, criminal history reports should be obtained on new applicants who have been short-listed for a specific position working with children. It is important to first interview applicants and conduct reference checks. This will minimize the costs associated with unnecessary criminal history checks for applicants who are unsuccessful in meeting the selection criteria or who are unsuccessful in completing the preliminary stages of the screening process.

In situations where a criminal history assessment is not required by law and obtaining an assessment is neither practicable nor proportionate to the resources of an organization, it is recommended that the organization requires the applicant/employee/volunteer sign a declaration stating that the individual has no relevant criminal history. While a written declaration cannot replace an official criminal history report, it can go some way towards mitigating risk and may assist in screening as a useful measure of an individual's integrity.

Other Background Checks

An organization may decide to undertake other screening measures such as psychological testing and on-the-job observation. The screening measures used by an organization to screen and assess potential and existing employees and volunteers will depend on both:

- the size, nature, and resources of the organization; and
- the level of risk attributed to the prescribed position or role.

Basic Screening (involving a formal criminal background check)

Basic screening may be sufficient in cases where:

- a criminal history assessment is not required by law
- the position to be filled is minimal risk (e.g., constantly supervised by individuals who have been comprehensively screened)

Screening includes:

- a comprehensive application form with a signed statement
- a thorough personal interview
- professional and personal reference checks
- confirmation of education

The following guidelines provide clear examples of steps that an organization can take to minimize the risk that it will recruit or hire unsuitable employees or volunteers.

- The organization should have policies and procedures for recruiting employees/volunteers and for assessing their suitability to work with children.
- Screening should be undertaken by the organization prior to the hiring/selection of new employees/volunteers.
- All current employees, contractors and volunteers in prescribed positions should be screened in accordance with these principles of safe practice.
- The organization should have clearly articulated screening and risk assessment procedures that are transparent and available to all relevant audiences.
- Risk assessment should take into consideration both situational and individual factors.
- If a criminal history report is obtained, criminal history information should be dealt with in accordance with appropriate NJ statutes.
- Where a criminal history assessment is required by law, the organization should ensure that a satisfactory criminal history assessment is conducted at agency-defined intervals.
- The rationale for excluding people should be documented and decision-making should be evidence-based; appropriate staff should consider applications and decisions should be recorded. This staff should include someone who has undergone training or who is familiar with issues of child sexual abuse protection. The organization should give applicants an opportunity to have reasonable input into the decision-making process (e.g., provide a right of reply).



Standard 5:

Educate staff and volunteers about the risk of sexual abuse.

The organization should train volunteers and employees who work with children or their records about the risks of child sexual abuse to promote the establishment and maintenance of a child– safe environment.

Training and education are important to ensure that everyone in the organization understands that preventing child sexual abuse and promoting child safety is everyone's responsibility. Employees and volunteers (in addition to parents/guardians and children) should feel confident and comfortable in discussing child protection issues. Training and support also promote an awareness of the appropriate standards of care required to be met by employees and volunteers to ensure that the organization meets its duty of care when providing services to children.

These guidelines provide clear examples of steps that an organization can take to provide appropriate training to employees and volunteers.

- The organization should develop a plan for individual employees/volunteers focusing on developing skills, knowledge and capabilities relating to preventing child sexual abuse and recognizing and responding to suspected abuse and neglect.
- Employees/volunteers undertaking prescribed functions should receive training about the risks related to child sexual abuse and their roles in protecting children in the organization from harm.
- To promote the safety and well-being of children, relevant areas for performance improvement should be identified and targeted in action plans to ensure employees/volunteers meet expected performance outcomes.
- Performance should be measured against standards of conduct and care.
- Employees/volunteers should be aware of the organization's expectations and appropriate behavior.
- Performance development should be an ongoing process.

**Click on the icons below to access a sample
Child Abuse Prevention Training Policy and
Acknowledgement Form.**



Standard 6:

Report and respond appropriately to suspected abuse and neglect.

Volunteers and employees should be able to identify and respond to children at risk of harm. The organization should make all volunteers and employees aware of their responsibilities under New Jersey's mandated reporting requirements: Any person having reasonable cause to believe that a child has been subjected to child abuse, neglect, or acts of child abuse must report that to the New Jersey Department of Children and Families (NJDCF). See NJ Ann. Stat. Sec 9.6 –8.10. A volunteer or employee may discuss his or her suspicions with his or her supervisor or with the organization's management, but that, by itself, does not discharge the volunteer's or employee's obligation to report reasonable suspicions to NJDCF. By making it a legal requirement for more people to function as mandatory notifiers, the safety net against abuse and neglect has expanded for our children. Early identification of abuse and neglect assists families in meeting their responsibility for children's safety. When a family cannot protect its children, NJDCF has the statutory mandate to assist with the provision of care and protection or to seek alternative care for children.

The organization must take proactive steps to educate all staff and volunteers to recognize, report and respond to allegations of suspected abuse and neglect. Clear procedures, guidance and training can help individuals recognize harm in addition to the risks faced by some children and the extra barriers they may face to obtaining help, because of their race, gender, age, religion or disability, sexual orientation, social background, and culture.

Keeping children and young people safe involves more than just reporting concerns to NJ DCF or responding once an allegation of abuse or neglect is made. It means minimizing the possibility of child sexual abuse occurring in the first place, working to reduce the impact of child sexual abuse after it has occurred, and doing everything possible to prevent it from occurring again and providing ongoing support and services to children, young people, and adults as appropriate. Therefore, the organization should also establish procedures that include clear, step-by-step guidance on what to do in different circumstances, including reporting and reacting to witnessed, suspected, or alleged child sexual abuse and/or a breach of the child safe policy. Standard, transparent reporting procedures and response mechanisms clarify roles and responsibilities and lines of communication. They also embody principles of confidentiality and thereby encourage concerns to be raised.

Systems for recording information and for dealing with complaints and compliance should be implemented. Clear, written guidelines for employees and volunteers when a child makes an allegation can promote the following:

- a relationship of trust is established;
- the trauma experienced by the child is minimized in the telling of the abuse;
- the incident is reported with the greatest possible factual accuracy; and
- the child understands that the issue may need to be taken further.

**Click on the icon below to access a sample
Child Abuse and Neglect Reporting Policy.**



Standard 7:

Establish policies that clearly address practices for transporting youth.

Screening program drivers is critical to the risk management process. Drivers who transport clients, especially minor children, and those transporting multiple children in vans, should be subject to much more stringent screening, background checking, and supervision than an employed driver who does not provide direct services to children. More specifically, organizations that employ drivers are encouraged to conduct thorough criminal background assessments, state/federal background checks, and Child Abuse Record Information (CARI) checks. Individuals hired to transport youth should be trained on the risks of child sexual abuse to promote the maintenance of a child-safe environment while transporting youth. Training on child abuse and neglect, in all forms, is critical for promoting awareness and helping drivers understand the appropriate standards of care required to be met while youth are in their care.

The following guidelines provide clear examples of steps that an organization can take to minimize the risk of child abuse and neglect while transporting youth:

- Develop a plan for drivers that focuses on developing skills, knowledge and capabilities relating to preventing child sexual abuse and recognizing and responding to suspected abuse and neglect.
- Require program drivers to receive training about the risks related to child sexual abuse and their roles in protecting children in the organization from harm.
- Ensure that policies and procedures related to transportation comply with all state laws that pertain to your organization (i.e., maintenance and inspection of vehicles/buses, pre-hire screening for drivers, driving records check, criminal and sexual offender records checks, CARI checks, etc.).
- If using a contractor for transportation, ensure that the company has complied with applicable state laws and has screened its drivers (e.g., criminal history assessments, background checks, CARI checks, etc.).

- Obtain written parental consent for transportation of each child/youth, and clearly state transportation arrangements and requirements in writing to all parents and other caregivers.
- Avoid having a child or youth travel alone in a vehicle with one adult if possible; ideally, there should be more than one adult and/or more than one child/youth in the vehicle.
- Minimize the potential for physical contact if a single child/youth and adult are alone in a vehicle by having the child sit in the back seat.
- Do not use panel vans or trucks for transporting children and youth.
- Establish policies, procedures, and check-in/check-out protocols that specify and make clear where drivers are supposed to be at any given time.

Click on the icon below to access a sample Transportation Policy.





Prevent Child Abuse-New Jersey is a nonprofit organization working to end child abuse. Our mission is to prevent child abuse in all its forms, for all of New Jersey's children. We know that victims of child abuse are far more likely to suffer from depression, alcoholism and drug abuse, lead lives of crime, drop out of school, and have violent relationships in their future. We continue to fight to end the vicious cycle of abuse.

Prevent Child Abuse-New Jersey is the only statewide non-profit dedicated to preventing child abuse in all its forms, for all of New Jersey's children. The organization was incorporated in 1979 as the New Jersey chapter of Prevent Child Abuse America, the 9th Chapter to be established among a national network.

Today, we exist as one of the largest chapters across the country and have become a recognized leader for prevention work in New Jersey.

For more information visit www.preventchildabuseNJ.org or call 1-800-Children.

Addendum:
Sample Policies and Resources

Child-Safe Policy for Youth Serving Organizations

[Agency Name] is committed to the safety and well-being of all children accessing our services. We have taken steps to educate and prepare our staff and volunteers about the risks related to child physical, sexual, and emotional abuse, instituted policies and practices designed to protect children from the risk of child abuse and trained our staff and volunteers about proper reporting requirements.

In order to provide all youth served with a child-safe environment, all [Agency Name] staff and volunteers are required to report suspected incidences of child abuse and neglect, whether they are physical, sexual, or emotional. To aid in the ability to identify such incidences, staff and volunteers refer to the Physical and Behavioral Indicators of Abuse and Neglect, which have been established by the New Jersey Department of Children and Families (DCF). The document is reviewed with all staff and volunteers during orientation before they begin serving youth and families.

Any staff member who suspects that a child is being abused and/or neglected should contact their direct supervisor or administrator immediately to discuss their observations. After reviewing the incident, the staff member and direct supervisor/administrator must contact the Division of Child Protection and Permanency (DCP&P) hotline at 1-877-NJ-ABUSE (1-877-652-2873) to speak with the intake worker on duty. All parties involved should provide the intake worker with a detailed description of the incident and should provide their contact information in the event the intake worker needs further information.

All suspected incidents of abuse and neglect will be documented and kept on file. In addition, a [Agency Name] Incident Report will be completed and sent to the direct supervisor/administrator for review. This document will be filed accordingly. When possible, staff will notify the family to inform them that a referral is being made in an effort to maintain the rapport that has developed between the two parties. However, the following describes circumstances in which a family may not be notified of a DCP&P referral:

If the staff member, supervisor, or administrator feels that anyone in the family may be in danger due to the referral; and/or

If the staff member, supervisor, or administrator feels the family may leave town or elude services due to the referral.

Releasing Information to DCP&P

As it pertains to releasing information to DCP&P, [Agency Name] staff and volunteers that provide direct services to children and families will adhere to reporting requirements specified above.

Religious Organization Child-Safe Policy

Religious Organization] is committed to the safety and well-being of all children accessing our services. We have taken steps to educate and prepare our staff and volunteers about the risks related to child physical, sexual, and emotional abuse, instituted policies and practices designed to protect children from the risk of child abuse and trained our staff and volunteers about proper reporting requirements.

To provide all youth served with a child-safe environment, all [Religious Organization] staff and volunteers are required to report suspected incidences of child abuse and neglect, whether they are physical, sexual, or emotional. To aid in the ability to identify such incidences, staff and volunteers refer to the Physical and Behavioral Indicators of Abuse and Neglect, which have been established by the New Jersey Department of Children and Families (DCF). The document is reviewed with all staff and volunteers during orientation before they begin serving youth and families.

Any staff member who suspects that a child is being abused and/or neglected should contact the Pastor or a member of the Trustee Ministry immediately to discuss their observations. After reviewing the incident, the staff member and Pastor and/or Trustee must contact the Division of Child Protection and Permanency (DCP&P) hotline at 1-877-NJ-ABUSE (1-877-652-2873) to speak with the intake worker on duty. All parties involved should provide the intake worker with a detailed description of the incident and should provide their contact information in the event the intake worker needs further information.

All suspected incidents of abuse and neglect will be documented and kept on file. In addition, a [Religious Organization] Incident Report will be completed and sent to the Pastor and Trustee Ministry for review. This document will be filed accordingly. When possible, staff will notify the family to inform them that a referral is being made in an effort to maintain the rapport that has developed between the two parties. However, the following describes circumstances in which a family may not be notified of a DCP&P referral:

§ If the staff member, Pastor, or Trustee feels that anyone in the family may be in danger due to the referral; and/or

if the staff member, Pastor, or Trustee feels the family may leave town or elude services due to the referral.

If a case of child abuse and/or neglect is substantiated, and the child remains in the home, the family will still be able to continue engaging in services in activities at [Religious Organization].

Releasing Information to DCP&P

As it pertains to releasing information to DCP&P, [Religious Organization] ministries that provide direct services to children and families will adhere to reporting requirements specified above.

Code of Conduct for Youth-Serving Organizations Prevention of Child Sexual Abuse

According to the APSAC Handbook of Child Maltreatment, "Child sexual abuse involves any sexual activity with a child where consent is not or cannot be given. This includes sexual contact that is accomplished by force or threat of force, regardless of the age of the participants, and all sexual contact between an adult and a child, regardless of whether there is deception, or the child understands the sexual nature of the activity. Sexual contact between an older and a younger child also can be abusive if there is a significant disparity in age, development, or size, rendering the younger child incapable of giving informed consent. The sexually abusive acts may include sexual penetration, sexual touching, or non-contact sexual acts such as exposure or voyeurism."

To minimize the occurrence of sexual abuse and provide a child-safe environment, [Agency Name] employees, volunteers, and members are expected to adhere to the following codes of conduct:

1. Employees, volunteers or caregivers involved in a program activity with their children shall never leave them unsupervised.
2. Employees, volunteers and/or caregivers will make sure a restroom is not occupied before allowing a child to use the facility and shall remain present near the doorway while the child uses the restroom. The doors to the facility must remain open while employees, volunteers and caregivers are assisting younger children using the restroom.
3. Employees, volunteers, and caregivers will supervise private activities such as diapering and the changing of a child's clothes. When this is not feasible, the employee or volunteer should be positioned so that they are visible to others.
4. Employees, volunteers, and caregivers are prohibited from using corporal punishment of any kind while providing or engaging in agency activities. This includes physical, sexual, verbal, or emotional abuse and/or neglect. Any type of abuse is totally impermissible and will result in an automatic dismissal for [Agency Name] employees and volunteers.
5. Employees, volunteers, and caregivers will respect children's rights not to be touched in ways that provoke feelings of discomfort. A child's right to say "no" is to be encouraged and respected. Other than cleaning and diapering, at no time should a child be touched in private areas of their bodies (i.e., vagina, penis, breasts, buttocks, etc.).
6. Employees and volunteers will use appropriate touch, which includes, patting on the back or shoulder, side hugs, and high fives. Employees and volunteers will refrain from touching children's personal areas or patting on the buttocks.
7. Employees and volunteers will not engage in private interaction or fraternization with youth or families via social media (i.e., Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, etc.).
8. Employees and volunteers will refrain from engaging in public displays of affection toward others.
9. The use of profane language, inappropriate jokes, suggestive comments, sharing intimate details of one's personal life, and any kind of harassment are strictly prohibited for employees, volunteers, and clients.
10. Employees and volunteers are prohibited from being alone with program participants outside of the organization's regular hours of operation. This includes babysitting, attending sleepovers, birthday parties, and inviting youth and/or families to your home, etc.
11. Employees and volunteers are prohibited from engaging in personal intimate or dating relationships.
12. Under no circumstances should an employee or volunteer release a child to anyone other than the authorized parent, guardian, or other adult authorized by the parent or the Division of Child Protection and Permanency (DCP&P). Such authorizations will be kept on file for reference.
13. Employees, volunteers, and caregivers are expected to report any suspicion of child abuse and/or neglect to their direct supervisor or agency administration and must contact the Division of Child Protection and Permanency (DCP&P) hotline at 1-877-NJ-ABUSE (1-877-652-2873) to speak with the intake worker on duty.
14. Employees, volunteers, and caregivers will respond to children with respect and consideration and will treat all children equally regardless of sex, race, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, or culture.
15. The use or possession of illicit drugs and/or alcohol is strictly prohibited on agency premises.

I understand that any violation of this Code of Conduct may result in disciplinary action.

Employee/Volunteer Signature: _____ Date: _____



Physical and Behavioral Indicators of Child Abuse and Neglect

| | Physical Indicators | Behavioral Indicators |
|------------------------|---|--|
| PHYSICAL ABUSE | <p>Unexplained bruises and welts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ On face, lips, mouth ▪ On torso, back, buttocks, thighs ▪ In various stages of healing ▪ Cluster, forming regular patterns ▪ Reflecting shape of article used to inflict (electric cord, belt buckle) ▪ On several different surface areas ▪ Regularly appear after absence, weekend or vacation <p>Unexplained burns:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Cigar, cigarette burns, especially on soles, palms, back or buttocks ▪ Immersion burns (sock-like, glove-like doughnut shaped on buttocks or genitalia) ▪ Patterned like electric burner, iron, etc. ▪ Rope burns on arms, legs, neck or torso <p>Unexplained fractures:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To skull, nose, facial structure ▪ In various stages of healing ▪ Multiple or spiral fractures <p>Unexplained laceration or abrasions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To mouth, lips, gums, eyes ▪ To external genitalia | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Wary of adult contacts ▪ Apprehensive when other children cry ▪ Behavioral extremes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Aggressiveness – Withdrawal ▪ Frightened of parents ▪ Afraid to go home ▪ Reports injury by parents |
| PHYSICAL NEGLECT | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Consistent hunger, poor hygiene, inappropriate dress ▪ Consistent lack of supervision, especially in dangerous activities or long periods ▪ Constant fatigue or listlessness ▪ Unattended physical problems or medical needs ▪ Abandonment | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Begging, stealing food ▪ Extended stays at school (early arrival and late departure) ▪ Constantly falling asleep in class ▪ Alcohol or drug abuse ▪ Delinquency (e.g. thefts) ▪ States there is no caregiver |
| SEXUAL ABUSE | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Difficulty in walking or sitting ▪ Torn, stained or bloody underclothing ▪ Pain or itching in genital area ▪ Bruises or bleeding in external genitalia, vaginal or anal areas ▪ Venereal disease, especially in pre-teens ▪ Pregnancy | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Unwilling to change for gym or participate in PE ▪ Withdrawn, fantasy or infantile behavior ▪ Bizarre, sophisticated or unusual sexual behavior or knowledge ▪ Poor peer relationships ▪ Delinquent or run away ▪ Reports sexual assault by caregiver |
| EMOTIONAL MALTREATMENT | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Habit disorders (sucking, biting, rocking, etc.) ▪ Conduct disorders (antisocial, destructible, etc.) ▪ Neurotic traits (sleep disorders, speech disorders, inhibition of play) ▪ Psychoneurotic reactions (hysteria, obsession, compulsion, phobias, hypochondria) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Behavior extremes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compliant, passive • Aggressive, demanding ▪ Overly adoptive behavior: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inappropriately adult • Inappropriately infant ▪ Attempted suicide |



Indicadores Físicos de Comportamiento de Maltrato y Negligencia Infantil

| | Indicadores Físicos | Indicadores de Comportamiento |
|---------------------------|--|---|
| MALTRATO FÍSICO | <p>Golpes y lastimaduras injustificadas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ En la cara, labios, boca ■ En el torso, espalda, nalgas, caderas ■ En distintas etapas de curación ■ Agrupadas y formando patrones uniformes ■ Que reflejan la forma del artículo usado para lesionar (cable eléctrico, hebilla del cinturón) ■ En distintas áreas de la superficie ■ Que aparecen regularmente después de una ausencia, fin de semana o vacaciones <p>Quemaduras injustificadas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Quemaduras de puro, cigarrillo, especialmente en las plantas del pie, las palmas de las manos, la espalda o nalgas ■ Quemaduras de inmersión (con apariencia de calcetín o guante en forma de dona, en los genitales o nalgas) ■ Con forma de un quemador eléctrico, plancha, etc. ■ Quemaduras de sogas en los brazos, piernas, cuello o torso <p>Fracturas injustificadas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ En el cráneo, estructura facial nasal ■ En distintas etapas de curación ■ Fracturas múltiples o espirales <p>Laceraciones o abrasiones injustificadas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ En la boca, labios, encías, ojos ■ En la parte externa de los genitales | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Temor al contacto con los adultos ■ Apreensivo cuando otros niños lloran ■ Comportamientos extremos: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Agresividad - Retraimiento ■ Temor a los padres ■ Temor de ir a casa ■ Informes de lesiones causadas por los padres |
| NEGLIGENCIA FÍSICA | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Hambre constante, falta de higiene, vestido inapropiado ■ Falta de supervisión constante, especialmente en actividades peligrosas o durante largos períodos ■ Fatiga o desatención constante ■ Necesidades médicas o problemas físicos no atendidos ■ Abandono | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Pedir o robar comida ■ Estadias prolongadas en la escuela (llegada temprano o salida retrasada) ■ Quedarse dormido constantemente en clase ■ Abuso del alcohol o drogas ■ Delincuencia (tal como robo) ■ Dice que no tiene quien lo cuide |
| ABUSO SEXUAL | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Dificultad para caminar o sentarse ■ Ropa interior rota, manchada o con sangre ■ Dolor o picazón en el área genital ■ Golpes o sangrado en la parte externa de los genitales, la vagina o el ano ■ Enfermedad venérea, especialmente en preadolescentes ■ Embarazo | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Negarse a cambiarse para la clase de gimnasia o participar en educación física ■ Comportamiento retraído, fantasioso o infantil ■ Conocimiento o comportamiento sexual extraño, sofisticado o inusual ■ Malas relaciones con los compañeros ■ Delincuencia o escapadas de su casa ■ Informe de ataque sexual por parte de un adulto encargado |
| MALTRATO EMOCIONAL | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Trastornos de hábito o repetitivos (chuparse el dedo, morder, mecerse, etc.) ■ Trastornos de conducta (destrutivo antisocial, etc.) ■ Rasgos neuróticos (trastornos de sueño, trastornos del habla, inhibición al jugar) ■ Reacciones psiconeuróticas (histeria, obsesión, compulsión, fobias, hipocondría) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Comportamientos extremos: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • sumiso, pasivo • agresivo, exigente ■ Comportamiento adoptivo extremo: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • inapropiadamente adulto • inapropiadamente infantil ■ Retrasos del desarrollo (físico, mental, emocional) ■ Intento de suicidio |

Child Abuse Prevention Training Policy

[Agency Name] is deeply committed to the safety and well-being of all youth and preventing child abuse in all its forms. We have zero tolerance for child abuse and have taken all reasonable steps to educate our staff about the risks related to child sexual abuse, instituted policies and practices designed to protect children from sexual abuse and trained our staff about proper reporting requirements when sexual abuse is suspected. [Agency Name] will take all necessary steps to enforce this policy.

All staff and volunteers will complete introductory child abuse prevention training within the first 30 days of employment for staff and for volunteers within the first two weeks after approval for volunteer assignments. Failure to comply will result in disciplinary action. All staff and volunteers must undergo a review of their Child Abuse Prevention Training on an annual basis.

All employees of [Agency Name] must follow the agency's Code of Conduct/Risk Management Procedures associated with the Sexual Abuse Safe Child Policy. Additionally, all employees must review and sign an acknowledgement form annually.

[Agency Name]

**Acknowledgement of Receipt of the Child-Safe Policy, Code of Conduct, and
Child Abuse Prevention Training Policy**

I acknowledge that I have received training on the content, requirements, and expectations of the [Agency Name]'s Child-Safe, Code of Conduct, and Child Abuse Prevention Policy. I also understand that I must read the policies in their entirety and comply with all the provisions outlined.

I agree to contact my direct supervisor if I have any questions regarding the implementation of these policies and/or code of conduct.

Employee/Volunteer Name: _____
(Please Print)

Employee/Volunteer Signature: _____ Date: _____

Supervisor's Signature: _____ Date: _____

[Name of Organization]

Child Abuse and Neglect Reporting Policy

[NAME OF ORGANIZATION] prohibits and does not tolerate sexual abuse or any other form of abuse or misconduct in the workplace or during any organization-related activity. [NAME OF ORGANIZATION] provides procedures for employees, volunteers, board members or other persons to report such acts. Those reasonably suspected or believed to have committed sexual abuse or misconduct will be appropriately disciplined, up to and including termination of employment or membership, as well as criminally prosecuted. No employee, volunteer, board member or other person, regardless of his or her title or position has the authority to commit or allow sexual abuse or misconduct.

Reporting Procedure

Immediately report suspected sexual abuse or misconduct to your direct supervisor. Upon notification of the incident the staff member and supervisor will contact New Jersey's Child Abuse/Neglect hotline at 1-877-NJ Abuse to make a report. It is not required to directly confront the person who is the source of the report, question, or complaint before making a report. [NAME OF ORGANIZATION] will take every reasonable measure to ensure that those named in the complaint of misconduct or are too closely associated with those involved in the complaint will not be part of the investigative team.

Anti-retaliation and False Allegations

[NAME OF ORGANIZATION] prohibits retaliation made against any employee, volunteer, board member or other person who lodges a good faith complaint of sexual abuse or misconduct or who participates in any related investigation. Making knowingly false or malicious accusations of sexual abuse or misconduct can have serious consequences for those who are wrongly accused. [NAME OF ORGANIZATION] prohibits making false or malicious sexual misconduct allegations, as well as deliberately providing false information during an investigation.

Anyone who violates this rule is subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment or membership and criminal prosecution.

Investigation and Follow-up

[NAME OF ORGANIZATION] will take all allegations of sexual abuse or misconduct seriously and will promptly, thoroughly, and equitably investigate whether misconduct has taken place. The organization may utilize an outside third party to conduct an investigation of misconduct. [NAME OF ORGANIZATION] will cooperate fully with any investigation conducted by law enforcement or other regulatory/protective services agencies. [NAME OF ORGANIZATION] will make every reasonable effort to keep the matters involved in the allegation as confidential as possible while still allowing for a prompt and thorough investigation.

Reporting to Law Enforcement or Appropriate Child or Adult Protective Services

[NAME OF ORGANIZATION] is committed to following the state and federal legal requirements for reporting allegations or incidents of sexual abuse or misconduct to appropriate law enforcement and child or adult protective services organizations. It is the policy of [NAME OF ORGANIZATION] not to attempt to investigate or assess the validity or credibility of an allegation of sexual or physical abuse as a condition before reporting the allegation to proper law enforcement authorities or protective services organizations.

Employee/Volunteer Statement

I have read, understand, and agree to comply with these reporting procedures. I have also received a copy of this policy.

Signature _____ Date _____

[NAME OF ORGANIZATION]
Sample Transportation Policy

All staff responsible for transporting children will be trained in their responsibilities to implement [NAME OF ORGANIZATION] 's child-safe policies and procedures. This policy includes both requirements and guidelines for staff who are responsible for transporting children. When feasible, there should be adherence to the recommendations in the guidelines. It is expected that the requirements will be followed routinely.

Requirements

- Drivers will receive annual training to develop their skills, knowledge, and capabilities relating to preventing child sexual abuse and recognizing and responding to suspected abuse and neglect.*
- While children are being transported, they will always be in the care of a trained and background check cleared staff member.*
- When a child/youth is transported in a company vehicle, the driver must be a screened adult or a paid staff person who is at least 18 years old.*
- Drivers must have a valid driver's license for the vehicle being operated. For example, if driving a school bus, a CDL is required. The organization will keep a copy of the staff member's valid driver's license on file.*
- Human Resources will ensure that pre-hire screening for drivers, driving records check, criminal and sexual offender records checks, and CARI checks, etc.) are conducted prior to hire.*
- Drivers must require that seat belts be used at all times and the number of passengers must not exceed the number of seat belts.*
- Drivers must follow the speed limits and all driving laws.*
- Drivers should be advised of a designated route and should not deviate from it except in cases of emergency or road detours.*
- The Program Manager and fleet supervisor should ensure that policies and procedures related to transportation comply with all state laws that pertain to your organization (i.e., maintenance and inspection of vehicles/buses).*

Guidelines

- Avoid having a child or youth travel alone in a vehicle with one adult if possible; ideally, there should be more than one staff member in the vehicle.*
- Eliminate the potential for physical contact if a single child/youth and adult are alone in a vehicle by having the child sit in the back seat.*
- Drivers must carry a charged and functional agency cell phone during transport.*