

Safeguarding Children Services
safeguardingchildren.com.au

Goodstart Early Learning Safeguarding Training

March 2023



1

Safeguarding Children Services
safeguardingchildren.com.au

The Australian Childhood Foundation
acknowledges Aboriginal and Torres
Strait Islander people as the
traditional custodians of this land
and we pay our respect to their
Elders past, present and future.



2

Safeguarding Children Self-care

The content of this training may evoke strong emotions for you.
Sometimes these emotions do not resolve and seeking assistance from professional support services can be supportive and useful.
Please be mindful of your own wellbeing during this training.
If these strong feelings do not pass, please let someone know and seek the support you need.

Goodstart EAP:
LifeWorks -1300 361 008





Safeguarding Children Services
safeguardingchildren.com.au


3

Session Outline

- Background
- Overview of Safeguarding Children and National Principles
- Safeguarding Culture & Responsibilities
- Safeguarding Recruitment
- Planning Reflection



Australian Childhood Foundation




Safeguarding Children Services
safeguardingchildren.com.au


4

Learning together

- We all have knowledge, lived experience and practice wisdom we can share
- Learn with curiosity and openness
- Bring your full potential for learning and role success
- Embrace today with full mind, body and spirit



Australian Childhood Foundation




Safeguarding Children Services
safeguardingchildren.com.au


5

Learning outcomes

- Explain why robust child safe recruitment processes are necessary
- Maximise child safe steps in the application process
- Ask the right interview questions and interpret and manage warning signs and behavioural based cues
- Conduct quality reference checking and exploring red flags
- Asking the right questions/ref checks and understand how to put these indicators together.




Australian Childhood Foundation



Safeguarding Children Services
safeguardingchildren.com.au

6

BACKGROUND:
Prevalence and impact of
child abuse, neglect and
harm.



7

Your safeguarding children role reflection

- What are your attitudes to safeguarding children and how have these developed over time?
- Think about a time that you have integrated safeguarding children principles into your work? What did you do? What did you learn? What was the result?
- Think of a time you have had to deal with a safeguarding children issue? What did you do? What was the result?





Safeguarding Children Services
safeguardingchildren.com.au

8

Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse 2013-2017

- More than **4000** different institutions were reported
- Heard cases from **7,981** survivors of child sexual abuse
- 41%** of all sexual abuse occurred in institutions with the duty to provide formal care to children
- 32%** were sexually abused in schools
- Almost **15%** were Abused in Institutions that provided Religious activities
- 6%** were assaulted when they were involved in sport or recreation pursuit.





Safeguarding Children Services
safeguardingchildren.com.au

9

Case Study

**Victorian Ombudsman Report
Alexander Jones**



13

Activity

Pages 4- 14, 18

Reflective questions?

How did I feel when reading the report?
Reflecting on the aspects of the recruitment process that took place, what are your thoughts?
What links can I make between what could have been changed, my recruitment experience and other events/ideas from this report?

14

Victorian Ombudsman's Report

- Alexander Jones was already the subject of serious child protection concerns at the time of his appointment to the Department-funded Finding Solutions program.
- Alexander Jones was also not qualified to work with vulnerable children and young people: at the time he joined Melbourne City Mission, he had no child-related employment history or relevant tertiary qualifications.
- This means he did not satisfy the essential requirements for employment as a Case Worker on the Finding Solutions program.
- The fact that Alexander Jones was able to obtain and subsequently keep a Working with Children clearance highlights clear legislative shortcomings limiting the effectiveness of Victoria's Working with Children Check scheme.



15

Safeguarding children and young people - Recruitment

Embedding child-safe practice in your recruitment process:

- Increases the safety and wellbeing of children and young people
- Reduces the risk of organisational abuse, neglect and harm
- Reduces organisational reputational risk
- Improves your organisation's vision, mission and ambition.

Australian Childhood Foundation | Safeguarding Children Services | safeguardingchildren.com.au

16

Reputational Risk

- The consequences of bad decisions or ignoring a red flag in the worst case scenario is that children are harmed
- Subsequently, it is the reputational damage to the organisation and personnel
- If it unsettles you, ask more questions, follow up, unpack it and notice the subtle red flag
- Remember – It wont always be easy to determine

Australian Childhood Foundation | Safeguarding Children Services | safeguardingchildren.com.au

17

Child abuse thrives on secrecy
A key strategy for organisations in preventing risk to children is to cultivate a culture of awareness, transparency and communication

Safeguarding children recruitment is a set of practices to ensure your staff and volunteers are suitable to work with children and young people. It's a vital part of creating a safe and positive environment and making a commitment to keep children safe from harm.

Australian Childhood Foundation | Safeguarding Children Services | safeguardingchildren.com.au

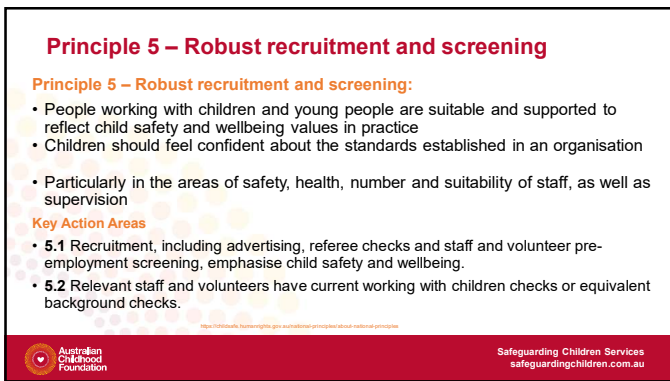
18



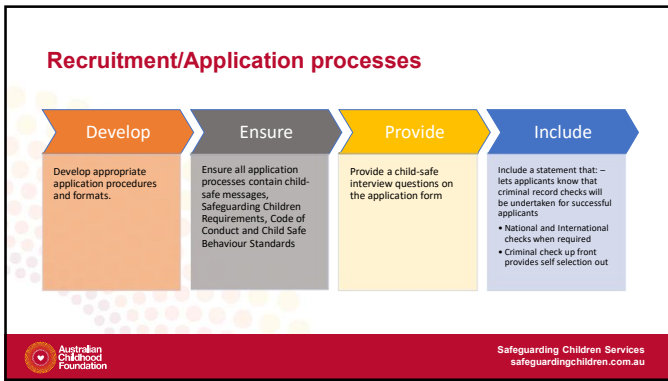
19



20



21



22

Activity-Reflection

What is your understanding of the term 'child-safe recruitment'?

How can you in your role as Talent Acquisition support the organisation to develop an environment where safeguarding is deeply embedded within the organisational culture?

Australian Childhood Foundation

23

SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN CULTURE & RESPONSIBILITIES:

Talent Acquisition obligations in Child Safe Organisation

Australian Childhood Foundation | Safeguarding Children Services | safeguardingchildren.com.au

24

Recruitment Obligations

Prevention measures	Publicising your organisations commitment to safeguarding children and young people
Informing applicants of the checks and thorough safeguarding screening process	Selecting only people with qualifications and thorough work references

Australian Childhood Foundation | Safeguarding Children Services | safeguardingchildren.com.au

25

Safeguarding in Job/Position Description

Refer	In all job descriptions, refer to Goodstart's values, Code of Conduct and Child Safe Behaviour Standards and safeguarding commitments towards a safe workplace for all, including the principle of 'do no harm'.
Refer	Refer to the responsibilities of all staff to Goodstart's safeguarding children commitments and their role to uphold and strengthen these.
Include	Include any specific responsibilities and duties towards safeguarding children for the position being advertised or when updating existing job descriptions

Australian Childhood Foundation | Safeguarding Children Services | safeguardingchildren.com.au

26

Advertising and enquiry

Safeguarding children and young people is not just operational it is core business

- Advertisements should clearly state Goodstart Early Learning is a Child Safe Organisation and all candidates will be safety checked to National Child Safe standards and note the need for the successful applicant to undertake all required checks, including identity, qualifications, vetting WWCC, police checks and reference checks.
- If an enquiry for a position is received verbally, HR will inform the person about the culture of child safety within Goodstart Early Learning and the safer recruitment process outlined in these procedures.
- The fact a candidate is known personally to anyone associated with the recruitment process or management of the organisation does not reduce or remove the requirements under this policy.

Australian Childhood Foundation | Safeguarding Children Services | safeguardingchildren.com.au

27

Activity: Child-safe messaging

Goodstart Early Learning is a Child Safe organisation. The safety and wellbeing of children is our first priority for everyone.

Goodstart provides a child-safe environment in all our programs and our activities.

We are committed to providing a safe place for all children to develop, grow and learn.

We have strong recruitment procedures to make sure the safest and most suitable people work with the children in our programs.

We provide our staff and volunteers with ongoing reflective supervision and support in their work with children.

28

ACTIVITY

SCAN GOODSTART'S WEBSITE, POSITION VACANT AND APPLICATION PROCESSES FOR CLEAR STATED SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN MESSAGING

Australian Childhood Foundation

Safeguarding Children Services
safeguardingchildren.com.au

29

Screening

ZERO TOLERANCE

Plan Ahead

Prepare questions for referees in advance and run by your panel members

Focus on conduct, knowledge, capabilities and attributes of the person.

Include questions to address any specific concerns from the interview.

Use a template to help you stay focused on listening to referee responses.

Australian Childhood Foundation


Safeguarding Children Services
safeguardingchildren.com.au

30

Safeguarding Children- Reference checks

Reference Questions could include:

- What level of contact has the applicant had with children in their role?
- Have you observed the applicant interacting with children and/or managing the behaviour of children?
- Are you comfortable knowing they might sometimes be working alone with children?
- Do you have concerns about them working with children?
- Did you have any disciplinary matters relating to the applicant or concerns about their adherence with the organisation's Code of Conduct and Child Safe Behaviour Standards?
- Would you employ them again?

 Australian Childhood Foundation

Safeguarding Children Services
safeguardingchildren.com.au

31

Analyse and evaluate the requirements to recognize Red Flags in referee checks .

 Australian Childhood Foundation


Safeguarding Children Services
safeguardingchildren.com.au

32

Short listing

Résumés

- Take the time to read resumes properly, noting previous experiences and work environments
- Use resumes and any cover letters to assess applicant against your Key Selection Criteria.
- Note any lengthy time periods not accounted for and follow up with questions at interview

 Australian Childhood Foundation

Safeguarding Children Services
safeguardingchildren.com.au

33


Interviewing

A range of values-based interview questions to establish suitability to work with children

Inclusion of mandatory safeguarding children topics/questions during face-to-face interviews

Ask candidates to provide real examples of safeguarding children rather than hypothetical situations

Develop conversation with candidates to understand them



Australian Childhood Foundation

Safeguarding Children Services
safeguardingchildren.com.au

34

Interview process


Prepare As part of the interview you should plan and prepare the interview and panel:

Brief Brief candidates on Goodstart's values, Code of Conduct and Child Safe Behaviour Standards, Safeguarding Children Requirement and Child Safe Policies and Procedures

Check If you have concerns about gaps in employment history, check with the candidate why these have occurred.

Include Include behavioural questions about safeguarding and suitability to work children and adults

Include Escalate and sense check



Australian Childhood Foundation


Safeguarding Children Services
safeguardingchildren.com.au

35

Reflection –Personal biases

Beware your own bias

- Reflection –What are your biases?



Australian Childhood Foundation

Safeguarding Children Services
safeguardingchildren.com.au

36

Common interviewing biases

- **Halo effect**- impacts by placing a high expectation on the candidate, disregarding any red flags on their resume that clearly highlight they aren't right for the role.
- **Horn effect**- We let it cloud our judgement, and more often than not it impacts our hiring decision because we believe that if the candidate is bad at A, they'll be poor at B or C.
- **Inconsistent questioning**- This is where different questions are asked to different candidates
- **Cultural noise**- Cultural noise is about the failure to recognise a candidate's responses which are socially acceptable rather than factual.



Safeguarding Children Services
safeguardingchildren.com.au

37

Overcoming bias

- **Have multiple people interview candidates**
- **Reduce the chit-chat in an interview**
- **Focus on skills**
- **Don't use your "gut"** You may just like a candidate or feel that this is the best person. Your gut is simply your own biases disguised as intuition.
- **Recruit from a wide variety of places**
- **Use developed intuition**



Safeguarding Children Services
safeguardingchildren.com.au

38

Understanding my neurobiology in interviewing

When fully developed, the Pre-Frontal Cortex allows us to:

- Make sound judgements
- Set goals and priorities
- Plan
- Control our impulses and emotions




Safeguarding Children Services
safeguardingchildren.com.au

39

Understanding my neurobiology in interviewing

- Understanding the role of autonomic arousal on learning, and the impact of negative emotions on cognition inform new ways of understanding behaviour.
- Autonomic responses are markers of emotion, attention, decision- making.
- Neuroception is how neural circuits distinguish whether situations or people are safe, dangerous, or life threatening.
- Our more primitive neural circuits operate by "neuroception" — totally involuntarily.
- People can detect the difference between authentic inquiry and an effort to persuade them.

 Australian Childhood Foundation

Safeguarding Children Services
safeguardingchildren.com.au

40




Red Flags
Activity : Metaphors and magic
Then 3 Questions you would ask around the red flag

41

Potential red flags-Interview responses

• A. Over-emphasis on their reasons for why they want to work with children	• B. Job hopping; multiple roles over short periods of time, lack of permanency in job history	• C. Asks about opportunities to be alone with children
• D. Is there an aspect of sporting environments around coaching young children (no adult interaction outside of work)?	• E. Unexplained gaps in employment or explained gaps that are vague or could require further enquiry	• F. Drastic career change, e.g., from a Tradesperson to a Childcare worker
• G. States they do not value or need supervision	• H. Insights into their social life and emphasis on child related activity or childlike interests	• I. Erratic employment history or constant change of address
• J. Frequent interstate /international movements	• K. Particular interest in children or young people with specific needs or vulnerabilities	• L. Inappropriate or irrelevant phrases such as "I have a wife and children" or "I am a leader of X organisation which is highly prestigious"


 Australian Childhood Foundation

Safeguarding Children Services
safeguardingchildren.com.au


42

Neurobiology of connection

- Watch and listen to responses.
- Look for evasiveness and inconsistency with resumes or other answers provided during interview.
- Use body language and eye contact
- Make notes to reflect your intuitive feelings.
- Discuss afterwards with panel members.



Australian Childhood Foundation



Safeguarding Children Services
safeguardingchildren.com.au


43

Activity


In groups:
Discuss the interview questions handout that would test candidate attitudes, motives and suitability for a ECEC role.

Which one would you use?

What type of answers would you expect to receive?



Australian Childhood Foundation




Safeguarding Children Services
safeguardingchildren.com.au

44


Are you sensing(perception) or Intuitive

KEYWORDS FOR SENSING AND INTUITION

SENSING	INTUITION
Practical	Visionary
Down-to-Earth	Future-Oriented
Concrete	Imaginative
Focused on the Present and Past	Conceptual
Detail-Oriented	Abstract
Literal	Focused on Meanings
	Read Between the Lines



Australian Childhood Foundation




Safeguarding Children Services
safeguardingchildren.com.au


45

Skills required

- Active listening "ALF – Ask, Listen, Formulate" and "Feel Felt Found"
- Ability to explore and draw out further information –to probe candidates about their personal life, attitudes and motivations, in order to establish a fuller picture of the character of the applicant and especially their suitability to work with children
- Ability to understand differences in answers within the interview "ask the same question twice"-competency to probe further, ask more questions
- Focus on the person call/meeting and not doing other things on other screens, replying to emails etc



Australian Childhood Foundation




Safeguarding Children Services
safeguardingchildren.com.au

46


Case Study

Trust your instinct

"If something doesn't sound right, question it, probe further, have that confidence to ask"



Australian Childhood Foundation




Safeguarding Children Services
safeguardingchildren.com.au


47

SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN RECRUITMENT:

Systems, processes, and practices for a Child Safe Organisation



Australian Childhood Foundation



Safeguarding Children Services
safeguardingchildren.com.au

48

Four levels of responsibility in safeguarding informed recruitment

Everyone Role specific Focal point Managers

Australian Childhood Foundation Safeguarding Children Services
safeguardingchildren.com.au

49

Case Study

Hard to fill service

Australian Childhood Foundation Safeguarding Children Services
safeguardingchildren.com.au

50

Safeguarding Children Processes and Practices

Pre-employment screening practices including:

- Referee checks,
- Criminal Checks,
- Working with Children Check and other registration,
- Proof of identity and qualifications checks

Verification that required qualifications, registrations and Working with Children Check are valid and up-to-date

Conduct a minimum of three professional references

Guidelines for recruiting and screening minors (under 18 years)

Australian Childhood Foundation Safeguarding Children Services
safeguardingchildren.com.au

51

Best Practice Approaches

- Do not be "forced to recruit" become an employer of choice
- Responding to concerns about the suitability of employees and volunteers once they have begun their role
- The date the policies come into force and when it will be reviewed.
- Ensuring all new staff and volunteers participate in an induction which includes Safeguarding children from abuse, neglect and harm
- A list of the supporting procedures that accompany the policies
- Provide opportunities to review and discuss processes and outcomes

Australian Childhood Foundation | Safeguarding Children Services | safeguardingchildren.com.au

52

Safeguarding children in employment contracts-agreements

- Ensure all relevant checks are completed either prior to making an offer of employment or make the offer of employment conditional upon successfully completing the checks.
- Conditional offers allow Goodstart to withdraw an offer of employment if, upon seeking references and completing background, identity and qualifications, WWCC and/or criminal record checks, the candidate is deemed unsuitable or a risk to others.
- Include a clause that stipulates that the employee, students, contractor and board member must adhere to Goodstart's policies, including the Safeguarding children requirement.
- Include a termination clause that enables termination for any breaches of policy, including the Code of Conduct and Child Safe Behaviour Standards.

Australian Childhood Foundation | Safeguarding Children Services | safeguardingchildren.com.au

53

Best Practice

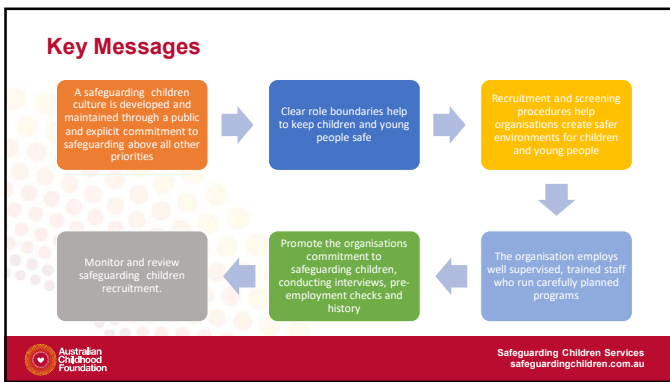
- Use a number of different recruitment and screening measures to assess the safety and suitability of a person to work with children.
- Relying only on a criminal record check is not enough information to assess that risk.
- Develop recruitment and screening procedures that must be adhered to for all staff, volunteers, consultants and contractors.
- Keeping records of the recruitment process.
- Ensure you see originals

Australian Childhood Foundation | Safeguarding Children Services | safeguardingchildren.com.au

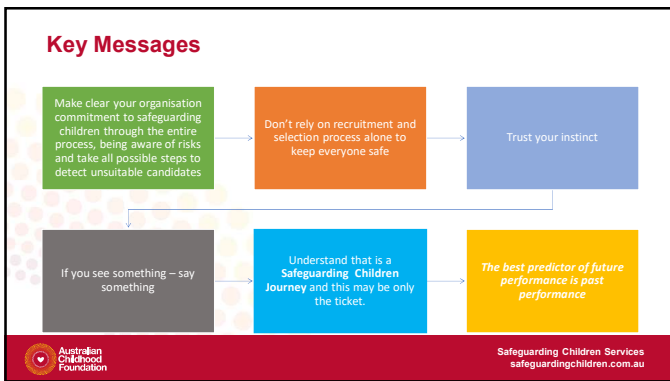
54



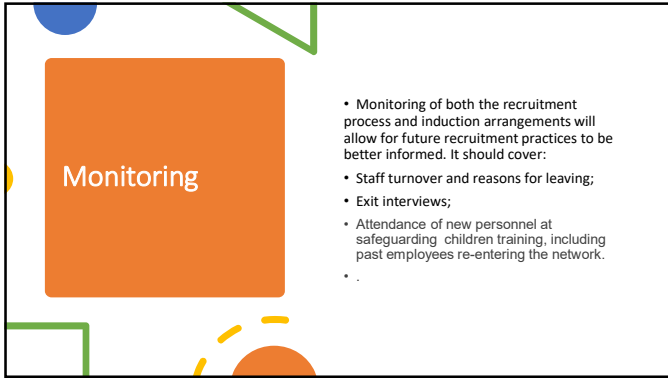
55



56



57



Monitoring

- Monitoring of both the recruitment process and induction arrangements will allow for future recruitment practices to be better informed. It should cover:
 - Staff turnover and reasons for leaving;
 - Exit interviews;
 - Attendance of new personnel at safeguarding children training, including past employees re-entering the network.

58

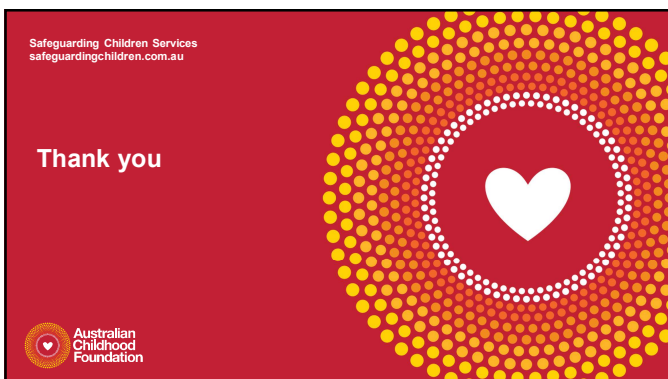


Planning-Next steps

- One thing for safeguarding children improvement I need to do in my role
- One thing for safeguarding children improvement my team needs to do
- One thing for safeguarding children improvement Goodstart Early Learning needs to do

Australian Childhood Foundation
Safeguarding Children Services
safeguardingchildren.com.au

59



Safeguarding Children Services
safeguardingchildren.com.au

Thank you

Australian Childhood Foundation

60

Our Safeguarding Services

- Over a decade, Safeguarding Services have partnered with over 300 organisations nationally and internationally to strengthen the capacity of institutions to keep children and young people safe.
- We offer a suite of standard and customised solutions that meet national and state Child Safe Standards, aimed at creating organisational culture change.
- We draw on best practice from the Foundation's experience and our network of partners, and evidence, including our recent Safeguarding Evaluation by the Centre for Social Impact.

Access our latest offerings:
<https://professionals.childhood.org.au/safeguarding-children-services/>

Accreditation Certification
Training Bespoke Services
