

Cultural Awareness

- Be sensitive to cultures and family traditions different from your own. These differences may affect the degree of participation of children and vulnerable people in activities and games.
- The family has many forms and leaders must respect a participant's support structures.
- Your team should have zero tolerance for language or activities that discriminate on the basis of gender, ethnicity, age or ability.
- Show respect for the authority structures of other cultures and traditions.
- Do not use words or statements that reflect ignorance or ridicule about other religions, cultures or the participant's family or caregivers.

Special Needs

- People with special needs may include very small children, people with particular intellectual, mental or physical disabilities, autistic spectrum disorders and the elderly.
- Being inclusive of children and vulnerable people with special needs has more to do with a positive attitude and a willingness to learn, than with a list of 'Dos and Don'ts'. Such attitude will have a significant influence on how others react.
- Being inclusive means seeing that each person has both the potential to learn and the need to be loved and included like all other people.
- You may need extra adult help according to the special needs of the child or vulnerable person.
- Find out as much as you can about the specific disability, as well as constructive ways to include the participant.
- Where appropriate, ask the participant what they think or want.

ChildSafe Ratios

- Every program must have a safe number of adult leaders in relation to the number of participants. This will differ according to the activity, age and capacity of the participants.
- ChildSafe recommend a general leader to participant ratio of **1:8**
- For young children, people with special needs, technical or higher risk activities the ratio should be lower relative to the context.
- Ensure that you have sufficient leaders to run your program.

Privacy

- As a leader you may, at times, require access to private information (e.g. medical) about a participant. Abide by your organisation's privacy policy in relation to protecting the right to privacy of participants and their families. Read it.
- Personal information and images obtained in programs must be used appropriately and only used with permission, for the intended program.
- Do not take a child or vulnerable person to your home, or encourage meetings outside the program activity.
- Consider whatever you post on social media as permanent, so treat accordingly. Share only what a parent or caregiver is happy to see.

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A ChildSafe Abridged Code of Practice



A ChildSafe Abridged Code of Practice for working safely with all participants

- ChildSafe is committed to the safety and wellbeing of all participants, especially children and vulnerable people involved in programs run by you and your organisation.
- When you work within this Code of Practice you will be supporting the rights of the participant, ensuring a safe environment for all.
- Team Members should work together to build and maintain a secure environment for all participants in a program.
- Leadership is a position of power and influence over others. This can sometimes be abused. The Code of Practice offers a safeguard against abuse of positional power, providing boundaries for appropriate behaviour.
- The Code of Practice provides essential guidelines for behaviour when working with children and vulnerable people in a program.
- The Code of Practice means that everyone on the team understands the expectations – we are all ‘on the same page’ and follow a structured approach.

Code of Practice Covers

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|----------------------|-----------------|
| • Behaviour | • Language |
| • Physical Contact | • Program Style |
| • Cultural Awareness | • Special Needs |
| • ChildSafe Ratios | • Privacy |

Know what your responsibilities are and what is expected of you before agreeing to be a carer of children and vulnerable people. Your organisation has this duty to you.

Behaviour

What we do as Team Members reflects our values. It is vital to behave in a way that upholds what we believe about children and vulnerable people – that they are valued and deserve to be treated with respect and dignity.

- Treat all participants with respect, and take notice of their reactions to your tone of voice and manner.
- Do not be alone with a child.
- Do not enter the sleeping accommodation of members of the opposite gender, except in emergencies.
- Be aware of situations when children or vulnerable people might be changing, showering or using the toilet.

Language

- It is important to use language that affirms the worth, dignity and significance of the participants.
- Ensure jokes are not made at the expense of others by using critical or sarcastic language towards people in an attempt at humour, as this erodes the sense of safety and care.
- Do not use ‘in jokes’, negative language, put downs or sexist language with other Team Members or with participants.
- Speak to children or vulnerable people as people of value, not speaking down in a demeaning or superior way.
- Where private conversations are necessary, the Team Member and child should remain visible to another adult in the group.

Physical contact

- Many children enjoy physical contact, and will seek it as a simple expression of affection and confidence, however others do not appreciate or seek physical contact.
- Physical contact between adults and children may be misconstrued. Children and vulnerable people may not be aware of creating such situations. It is your duty to be alert to such circumstances. We must always be SEEN to be doing the right thing, and knowing that we are. Physical contact should:
 - Be initiated by the participant’s need and not yours.
 - Be with the child or vulnerable person’s permission – any resistance must be respected.
 - Don’t contact in the area normally covered by bathers/swimwear.
 - Be open and not secretive.
 - Be governed by the age and developmental stage of the person.

Program style

- Children and vulnerable people are not always able to sense the risks associated with participating in activities.
- Your program and activity choices need to be made keeping the participant group’s capability and risk appetite in mind.
- The activities you choose will speak loudly about the values you and your organisation hold about people.
- Be willing to drop an activity if you sense it is not working safely, or makes participants feel angry or isolated.
- Put in extra planning and support measures when an activity has extra challenges.
- Ask your Team Leader to help you plan well.