

## **Safeguarding standards in toddler groups**

All organisations that are in contact with children – including toddler groups – are required by law to have a Safeguarding Policy. This includes having a staff recruitment procedure, and a system for reporting any suspected or alleged abuse. It is recommended that practice guidelines are produced in a separate document for workers.

It is an easy mistake to think that because parents and carers are always present in toddler group it isn't really necessary to have a Safeguarding Policy. However, all staff (whether paid or volunteers) will engage with the children to some degree and are in a position of trust. Because of their role in the group, both children and parents will not treat toddler group staff with the same caution as they might a stranger in the street.

If your toddler group is operating from a church, then it may be covered by the church's Safeguarding Policy. Check this with the church to make sure this is the case, and discuss the policy with them so that you are all clear about the content and lines of accountability. If your group hasn't got a Safeguarding Policy, put one in place as soon as possible. If you already have a policy, make sure that it's up-to-date and that your staff have undertaken appropriate safeguarding training.

Make sure parents and carers attending the group are aware you have a safeguarding policy and who they can go to should they have any concerns. The policy should reassure parents and carers that the group has recruited its workers safely, and that it is following good practice guidance.

### **Reporting concerns**

Toddler groups need to comply with legislation and government expectations with regard to safeguarding. If you are working as part of a church, you should follow their policy in relation to responding to any concerns. Where abuse is disclosed or suspected, this needs to be reported to the statutory authorities (Children's Social Care or the police). In addition, others may need to be informed. If an allegation is made against a staff member the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) will need to be contacted. If your group is a charity, tell the Charity Commission about any serious incidents and be aware that the group's insurers may also need to be informed.

### **Standards in safeguarding**

Thirtyone:eight has produced the following ten standards for faith groups which you can use to measure how effective your toddler group is at keeping children safe:

1. Have you got a formal, up to date, working Safeguarding Policy?
2. Are you developing safeguarding awareness and providing training for all your workers?
3. Do you have safe recruitment procedures?
4. Are your workers appropriately managed, supervised and supported?

5. Have risk assessments been made and is everyone working safely?
6. Do your workers know how to relate to children appropriately?
7. Do your workers know how to respond to concerns of abuse?
8. Do you have pastoral care available for those who have suffered abuse?
9. Have you got systems to manage those who pose a risk to children?
10. If you are working in partnership with other organisations, do they have safeguarding policies in place?

For further information contact Thirtyone:eight, an independent Christian safeguarding charity. Tel: 0303 003 1111. Web: [www.thirtyoneeight.org](http://www.thirtyoneeight.org)

Find out more: [www.cff.org.uk/playtime](http://www.cff.org.uk/playtime)

Care for the Family

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