

Choosing a service

Information for families seeking overnight respite care

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www.ocg.nsw.gov.au

Parents arranging overnight care for their child outside the family home can choose organisations that best suit the needs of the child and the family.

Providers of this type of care are regulated in NSW as 'specialised substitute residential care'. The Office of the Children's Guardian regulates providers to support them to be safe places for children and young people.

Providers must take active steps to keep children and young people in their care safe. They must work to implement the Child Safe Standards to help them do this. The Child Safe Standards are:

1. Child safety is embedded in organisational leadership, governance and culture
2. Children participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously
3. Families and communities are informed and involved
4. Equity is upheld, and diverse needs are taken in to account
5. People working with children are suitable and supported
6. Processes to respond to complaints of child abuse are child focused
7. Staff are equipped with the knowledge, skills and awareness to keep children safe through continual education and training
8. Physical and online environments minimise the opportunity for abuse to occur
9. Implementation of the Child Safe Standards is continuously reviewed and improved
10. Policies and procedures document how the organisation is child safe.

The checklist on the next page suggests questions and actions that parents and guardians can use when deciding whether a provider takes child safety seriously and is suitable for your child.

If you have doubts about a provider's commitment to keeping children safe, please contact the Office of the Children's Guardian on 02 8219 3798 or ssrc@ocg.nsw.gov.au

On our website you can find more information about specialised substitute residential care, the Working with Children Check and Child Safe Standards. There are more resources to help parents and guardians choose people and organisations to work with your children.

Checklist

Below is a list of questions parents and guardians can ask of potential care providers to help determine if they are child safe.

Policies

Confirm the provider has information about:

- implementing the Child Safe Standards
- child Safe policies
- complaint and feedback processes
- commitment statements
- staff code of conduct
- service agreement with parent/guardian.

Environment

Does the care environment:

- have rooms and places that allow easy supervision by carers
- have a clean, home-like atmosphere
- have a first-aid kit, and signs explaining emergency procedures.

Staff

Does the provider:

- only employ staff to work with children if they have a verified Working with Children Check clearance

- employ staff with relevant training and experience
- provide regular supervision to support staff
- provide regular staff training.

Does the provider speak with you about:

- your child's likes and dislikes
- your child's routines
- how your child communicates
- the types of support your child needs
- your child's disability
- activities your child likes
- emergency contacts and instructions
- things your child may have difficulty with and ways to support them
- how they can meet your child's needs
- how they will involve you and your child in planning and decision making
- how they will respond to any incidents
- how they will communicate with you about any events that involve your child
- how they will assess whether your child gets on with other people in the care environment (placement matching)
- how your child will be introduced into the care environment.

Office of the Children's Guardian

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