

Is it a safe place for our kids?

A guide for parents.

As a parent or carer you play an important role in making sure your kids are spending time in places that are safe. This guide will help you look out for 'child safe' places.

What is a 'child safe' place?

Child safe means making sure the place where our kids spend time is safe from neglect, physical, sexual or emotional harm or abuse. A child safe place will have rules that are set up to make sure our kids are kept safe.

Parents have a right to know who is working with their children.

It is your business to know who is working with your children. Every day kids around NSW spend time with adults outside of their home. This can be at places like a sports club, youth group centre, or a drama studio. As a parent or guardian you need to understand what organisations should be doing to keep your child safe.

It is the law that people who work with your children including many tutors, nannies, coaches and counsellors have a current Working With Children Check. However, there is much more an organisation can do to keep kids safe.

Understanding the Working With Children Check.

In NSW all people who are working with your children (as well as a number of volunteers) need to have a current NSW Working With Children Check clearance number.

Some people don't have to get a Working With Children Check number, such as a parent that volunteers in an activity that involves their own child e.g. a sports coach. The Check provides either a clearance or a bar to work with children.

It is a crime for a person with a bar to work or volunteer with children.

How do you know they have a Check?

Parents and guardians are now able to 'verify' if the person working with their child (under 18) has a Working With Children Check. When we say 'verify', we mean parents can check online.

By checking online you will instantly see if the person is allowed to work with your child. Also, if they become a 'barred' person we will let you know. You will however need to know their details, including their name, birth date, application or clearance number.

What parents can do.

Employers and organisations can check or verify online that their workers or volunteers have a current Working With Children Check clearance number. So you don't need to check a person who is employed but if your child has a coach or tutor that you pay directly you can go online to verify a Working With Children Check.

How to verify a WWC online

To verify, follow these simple steps:

- STEP 1** Ask the person who works with your child for their surname, date of birth and WWCC or APP number.
- STEP 2** Go to www.kidsguardian.nsw.gov.au/check and click on this blue button:
- STEP 3** Under Verify, click the Individuals (e.g. parents) Verify button.
- STEP 4** Complete the form, including the reason why you are checking the person (e.g. sports coach, dance teacher etc)
- STEP 5** Click **Submit**.
- STEP 5** You will receive the outcome by email.



What should I look for when choosing a safe program for my child?

It's always good to become familiar with the places where your children spend time. A Working With Children Check is important but its only one part of what should be done to make a place 'child safe'. When choosing a service or program for your child it's important to ask questions of those in charge so they can tell you what they do to keep kids safe.

For example, do staff have the right qualifications and training? What type of training, ongoing support and advice do workers receive about creating a child safe environment? Does the organisation involve the parents and children in the decisions that affect them? How does the organisation respond if there is a complaint or allegation?

It's also important to ask your children about their experiences and let them know you are interested in what they do. Talk about safe behaviours and teach them to talk to you so they can tell you if they ever feel scared, worried, upset or uncomfortable.

Some questions that may help to start the conversation include:

- ◆ What do you like most about the service?
- ◆ What don't you like?
- ◆ Does anybody make you feel happy?
- ◆ Does anybody make you feel sad?
- ◆ What makes you feel safe?
- ◆ What makes you feel scared?

To find out more about child safe organisations go to:

www.kidsguardian.nsw.gov.au/childsafes
or contact us on (02) 8219 3600