

Keeping Safe: Child Protection Curriculum Australia



Type of intervention



Classroom setting

Target group/s, level/s of prevention and sub-group/s:

Primary prevention

Children and Young People (Victims)

Young Children (0-15 Years), Children (6-11 Years), Young People (12-17 Years) | Male & Female | Classroom | English

Target population

The Keeping Safe: Child Protection Curriculum (KS: CPC) caters for all children and young people in South Australian government schools and preschools. This includes over 900 sites and over 180,000 children and young people. The Department for Education and Child Development (DECD) also has agreements with other jurisdictions within South Australia and across Australia for using the KS:CPC.

Delivery organisation (e.g. LFF UK, Prison Service of England and Wales)

The delivery organisation is the Department for Education and Child Development, South Australia.

Mode and context of delivery

The KS:CPC has been developed by experienced educators from South Australian schools and preschools under the auspices of DECD. The curriculum has been subjected to rigorous trialling by educators in early childhood centres and schools and evaluated by leading experts in the field of child protection. The curriculum was further reviewed, updated and trialled in 2013 to align with current curriculum, pedagogy and contemporary issues such as bullying and cyber safety.

The KS:CPC is delivered by trained educators in early learning centres, preschools, primary schools and secondary schools.

Under the Children's Protection Act 1993, DECD has a legislated responsibility with other agencies to protect children and young people under 18 years of age from abuse in its own settings and in the wider community. All DECD sites

have the responsibility reinforced by anti-discrimination legislation and duty-of-care requirements to protect and care for every child and young person.

It is a requirement under the [Child Protection in Schools, Early Childhood Education and Care Services Policy](#) (2011) that:

- All children and young people in DECD preschools and schools will access approved child protection curriculum each year.
- The approved child protection curriculum will be taught by staff who have received training in its use.

Level/Nature of staff expertise required (e.g. professional background)

Before incorporating the child protection curriculum into their teaching and learning programmes, educators must participate in the formal professional learning provided through a DECD approved training organisation and familiarise themselves with the contents of this curriculum.

An extensive state-wide KS:CPC training program was conducted by the DECD in 2006 and 2007 with approximately 18 000 staff trained during this period.

The KS:CPC can be used by any staff working with children and young people, providing they have completed the full day face to face course. An online update course is also available for previously trained staff.

Intensity/extent of engagement with target group(s)

The KS:CPC is divided into 5 separate documents:

- Early Years: Ages 3-5
- Early Years: Years R-2
- Primary Years: Years 3-5
- Middle Years: Years 6-9
- Senior Years: Years 10-12

There are also two support documents for educators working with children and young people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds or children and young people with disability and additional needs.

Educators deliver the program each year at each year level from preschool to year 12 using developmentally appropriate learning strategies outlined in the KS:CPC.

The KS:CPC concepts and activities can be integrated into the preschool programme using the Early Years Learning Framework learning outcomes and into the school programme through the Health and Physical Education learning area of the Australian Curriculum.

Description of intervention

The Keeping Safe: Child Protection Curriculum

Aims: The KS:CPC teaches all children from a young age, in an age appropriate way, to:

- recognise abuse and tell a trusted adult about it
- understand what is appropriate and inappropriate touching
- understand ways of keeping themselves safe.

Themes: It is predicated on two main themes which are presented through topics and activities of increasing complexity:

- We all have the right to be safe.
- We can help ourselves to be safe by talking to people we trust.

Focus Areas: These two themes are explored through four Focus Areas, which are examined in growing complexity in accordance with the age of the learners.

- Right to be safe
- Relationships
- Recognising and reporting abuse
- Protective strategies

The KS:CPC uses a developmental approach to introduce concepts and further embed the strategies children and young people require to be safe.

While its specific aim is to help children and young people, from the ages of three to senior secondary, to learn to recognise and report abuse and develop ways of protecting themselves from abuse, its wider focus covers rights, responsibilities, relationships, warning signs, trust and networks, bullying, cyberbullying, cyber safety, ethical behaviour, problem solving, persistence, sexual health, sexual diversity and help-seeking services.

Information for educators: The KS:CPC details some important aspects to assist in educators understanding of child abuse, their responsibilities, recognising signs of abuse, strategies for responding to abuse, embedding the KS:CPC into the preschool/school curriculum, catering for a diverse range of students, and providing students with strategies to keep themselves safe. Some of this information includes:

- Child abuse: The KS:CPC provides information to educators on the 4 different types of abuse: physical, sexual, emotional/psychological and neglect. For the purpose of the ECSA research into child sexual abuse a more detailed description of the KS:CPC's sexual abuse content includes:

Educators:

- Definition of sexual abuse
- Understanding developmentally appropriate sexual behavior
- Responding to problem sexual behaviour
- Educator's responsibilities
- Grooming (online and offline)
- Cyber safety and cyberbullying (inappropriate material, sexting)
- Sexual abuse, discrimination and harassment
- Criminal implications.

Children and young people (age appropriate)

- Anatomical names for parts of the body
- Touching and secrets

- Grooming (online and offline)
 - Cyber safety and cyberbullying (inappropriate material, sexting)
 - Rights and responsibilities in sexual relationships
 - Abuse of power
 - Sexual abuse, discrimination and harassment
 - Sexual diversity
 - Criminal implications
- **Non-Negotiable Aspects:** To deliver the KS:CPC safely and effectively, some aspects are considered ‘non-negotiable’. These 11 aspects concern how the curriculum is managed regarding such things as involvement of parents/caregivers, confidentiality, involvement of visitors, and self-protection.
 - **Recommended Learning Strategies:** The 18 strategies are recommended by educators with experience in the area of teaching protective behaviour and child protection. Activities within the KS:CPC include a recommended learning strategy to assist educators in effectively delivering the lessons.
 - **Whole site approach:** A whole site approach involves staff working as a collective group of professionals, led by the site leader, to develop a clear and coordinated curriculum across all year or age levels and accessible to all children and young people. Research confirms that a whole site approach is critical in ensuring successful implementation of curriculum initiatives.
 - **Parent/Caregiver information and communication:** Although parent permission is not required under the Education Act (1972), sites keep parents/caregivers informed and encourage them to seek further clarification if required. This is done through newsletters, parent/caregiver letters, information sessions and Governing Council meetings.
 - **Reporting:** We are currently exploring the option of including an overview/summary of the KS:CPC topics in student reports each semester.
 - **Student diversity:** Whilst child abuse and neglect occur across all socio-economic and cultural groups, a number of factors can contribute to some groups of children and young people being at greater risk of abuse and/or neglect. The KS:CPC provides additional information and resources for educators working with children and young people:
 - from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander backgrounds
 - with disability and additional needs
 - from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds

Evaluation

In 2010, an independent organisation, KPMG, undertook an extensive evaluation of the KS:CPC to determine the effectiveness of the curriculum and its transferability to other jurisdictions.

The evaluation demonstrated that the KS:CPC:

- is well regarded and seen as best practice by educators
- is having a positive impact
- is flexible and capable of being used in a range of different contexts.

In 2013, a research project on *Child sexual abuse prevention education: A review of school policy and curriculum provision in Australia* by Walsh et al (2013) assessed and compared the policies and curriculum initiatives in primary schools across state and territory Departments of Education in Australia.

References

Children's Protection Act (1993). South Australia.

Department for Education and Child Development, South Australia. (2011) *Child Protection in Schools, Early Childhood Education and Care Services Policy*.

Department for Education and Children's Services, South Australia. (2009). *Keeping Safe: Child Protection Curriculum*. Hindmarsh: The state of South Australia, Department for Education and Children's Services

Walsh, K., Berthelsen, D., Nicholson, J.M., Brandon, J.S., & Rachele, J.N. (2013). *Child sexual abuse prevention education: A review of school policy and curriculum provision in Australia*. Oxford Review of Education. Vol.39. No. 5, pp649-680.

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