



Child Safe Standards Scheme

Year 2 Organisational Survey

Outcomes Report

2025-26



Executive summary

The ACT Child Safe Standards Scheme Year 2 Organisational Survey (2025–26) was undertaken to understand how organisations are implementing the Child Safe Standards and identify areas where additional support may be needed. A total of 72 responses were received from organisations across a range of sectors, with particularly strong representation from the early childhood education and care sector. As respondents were not required to answer every question, response numbers varied across the survey.

The findings indicate strong engagement with the Child Safe Standards Scheme with many respondents reporting that staff and volunteers had been made aware of the Scheme and that they were making either ‘a lot’ or ‘a great deal’ of progress towards implementation. Organisations reported taking practical steps to strengthen child safety, including updating policies and procedures, delivering staff and volunteer training, and reviewing recruitment, induction, and governance practices.

Leadership support, staff engagement, and access to practical resources were identified as key enablers of implementation. While most respondents reported they had not experienced implementation challenges, those who did commonly identified limited time, workforce capacity, and competing priorities as barriers.

The survey also highlighted that meaningful participation of children and young people remains a challenge for many organisations. Notably, very few reported any substantive involvement of children and young people in governance, recruitment, training, or policy development activities.

Respondents identified a need for practical support, particularly in relation to child-friendly resources, annual action planning, and strengthening children's participation in organisational decision-making. Training, newsletters, train-the-trainer programs, and practical implementation tools were among the most preferred forms of support.

Overall, the findings demonstrate positive progress towards implementation of the Child Safe Standards and will inform future guidance, resources, training, and sector support activities.

Introduction

The ACT Child Safe Standards Scheme Year 2 Organisational Survey (2025–26) was conducted to understand how organisations are implementing the Child Safe Standards, identify implementation strengths and challenges, and determine where additional support may be needed. Findings will inform future guidance, resources, training, and sector support provided by the office of the Children and Young People Commissioner.

Methodology

The survey was administered online through SurveyMonkey in the 2025–26 reporting period and received 72 responses. Respondents represented a diverse range of organisations that provide services to, or work with, children and young people across the ACT. Survey responses were de-identified prior to analysis.

The survey contained 21 questions. Questions relating to consent and contact information (Q1–Q3, Q17, and Q21) were excluded from the analysis. Results are presented under the following themes:

- Q4–Q6: Respondent profile
- Q7–Q8: Awareness and implementation progress
- Q9–Q10: Implementation activities
- Q11–Q13: Implementation enablers and barriers
- Q14–Q15: Child participation and barriers to participation
- Q16–Q18: Collaboration and resource-sharing opportunities
- Q19–Q20: Priority support and resource needs.

A copy of the survey instrument is provided at **Attachment A**, and a de-identified summary of survey results is provided at **Attachment B**. Survey results are presented according to the relevant question groupings.

Results and analysis

Respondent profile (Q4-Q6)

A total of 72 responses were received, with 48 respondents providing organisational profile information.

The largest respondent group was from the Early Childhood Education and Care sector (29%, n=16), followed by Disability Service Providers (11%, n=6), Faith-based organisations (11%, n=6) and schools (7%, n=4). A smaller number of responses were received from therapeutic services, tutoring and private lesson providers, social or community-based clubs, health services, before and after school care providers, and government services.

Respondents represented a range of organisational structures, including private/commercial organisations (46%, n=22), not-for-profit organisations (40%, n=19), government organisations (6%, n=3), and sole traders (8%, n=4).

Most organisations reported employing paid staff only (65%, n=31), although organisations with a mix of paid and volunteer staff (17%, n=8), volunteer-only workforces (8%, n=4), and solo operators (8%, n=4) were also represented.

Awareness and implementation progress (Q7-Q8)

Of the 45 respondents who answered questions relating to awareness and implementation progress, 73% (n=33) reported that staff and volunteers had been made aware of the ACT Child Safe Standards Scheme. A further 16% (n=7) were unsure, while 11% (n=5) reported that staff and volunteers had not yet been made aware of the Scheme.

More than half of respondents to these two questions (56%, n=25) reported making either 'a lot' or 'a great deal' of progress towards implementing the Child Safe Standards. A further 16% (n=7) reported a moderate amount of progress, while 22% (n=10) reported a little progress, and 7% (n=3) reported no progress.

Overall, the findings suggest a high level of awareness of the ACT Child Safe Standards Scheme amongst participating organisations, with the majority reporting meaningful progress towards implementation.

Implementation activities (Q9–Q10)

Only three respondents reported actions they would be most likely to undertake to commence implementation of the Child Safe Standards, limiting broader interpretation of these results. However, the responses suggest organisations commencing implementation are likely to prioritise policy development, self-assessment, risk management, and workforce awareness activities.

In contrast, 36 respondents reported actions already undertaken to support implementation of the Child Safe Standards. The most commonly reported activities were developing or updating child safe policies and procedures (85%, n=31), providing key messages to staff (81%, n=29), providing staff and volunteer training (75%, n=27), and reviewing staff and volunteer roles and responsibilities (72%, n=26).

More than half of respondents also reported making policies publicly available, undertaking risk assessments, reviewing participation opportunities for children and young people, and improving recruitment and induction processes.

Overall, the findings suggest that participating organisations have progressed beyond awareness of the Child Safe Standards and are actively implementing child-safe practices across governance, workforce management, and service delivery.

Implementation enablers and barriers (Q11–Q13)

Question 11 asked respondents what helped their organisation commence implementation of the Child Safe Standards. Seventeen respondents provided qualitative responses, with the most commonly identified enablers being leadership and management support, staff commitment and engagement, dedicated staff to oversee implementation, and access to practical resources, tools, and guidance materials. Several respondents also described child safety as being embedded within existing governance, quality improvement, and safeguarding frameworks, which supported implementation efforts.

Question 12 asked respondents whether their organisation had experienced implementation challenges. Of the 26 respondents who answered this question, 62% (n=16) reported they had not experienced implementation challenges, 31% (n=8) reported experiencing challenges, and 8% (n=2) indicated their organisation had not yet commenced implementation.

Question 13 explored barriers to implementation. Eleven respondents provided additional information, identifying limited time, competing organisational priorities, workforce capacity, staff knowledge and understanding, and access to practical resources as the most common challenges.

Volunteer-based organisations also highlighted difficulties recruiting and retaining volunteers, balancing competing responsibilities, and understanding how the Standards apply within their operating context.

Overall, the findings suggest implementation is strongest where there is leadership commitment, access to practical guidance, and sufficient organisational capacity. While most respondents reported they had not experienced significant implementation challenges, those who did commonly identified resource constraints, workforce pressures, and competing priorities as barriers to implementation.

Child participation and barriers to participation (Q14–Q15)

Question 14 asked respondents to rate the extent to which children and young people are involved in governance, recruitment, training, or policy development within their organisation. Of the 28 respondents to this question, 39% (n=11) reported no involvement, 21% (n=6) reported a little involvement, 25% (n=7) reported a moderate amount of involvement, and 14% (n=4) reported a lot or a great deal of involvement. Overall, almost two-thirds of respondents (61%, n=17) reported either no involvement or only limited involvement by children and young people.

Question 15 explored barriers to participation. Twenty respondents provided qualitative responses, identifying children's age and developmental stage, limited time and resources, adult-centred organisational processes, and staff confidence in facilitating participation as the most common barriers.

Respondents also highlighted challenges creating meaningful participation opportunities, collecting age-appropriate feedback, and balancing participation with competing organisational priorities. Volunteer-based organisations and those with limited interaction with children and young people reported additional challenges identifying appropriate participation opportunities.

Overall, the findings suggest that meaningful participation of children and young people remains one of the more challenging aspects of implementing the Standards, with many organisations seeking practical approaches to support age-appropriate engagement.

Collaboration and resource-sharing opportunities (Q16–Q18)

Question 16 asked respondents whether they would be willing to share ideas, resources, or implementation progress with other organisations. Of the 28 respondents who answered this question, 36% (n=10) indicated they would be willing to share resources, while 64% (n=18) indicated they would not.

Question 18 explored opportunities for collaboration and sector engagement. Respondents demonstrated strong interest in participating in collaborative activities, particularly training (93%, n=13), awareness-raising sessions (79%, n=11), case study discussions (69%, n=9), and communities of practice (50%, n=7). There was also interest in consultations and the development of tools, resources, and policies.

Priority support and resource needs (Q19–Q20)

Question 19 asked respondents to identify areas where they may need support or resources to assist implementation of the Child Safe Standards. Of the 21 respondents to this question, the most commonly identified support needs were preparing child-friendly materials (38%, n=8) and creating an annual action plan related to the Child Safe Standards (38%, n=8). This was followed by children and young people's participation (29%, n=6) and supporting parents, carers, and communities (29%, n=6).

Other frequently identified support areas included creating safe physical or online spaces (24%, n=5), continuous improvement (24%, n=5), and equity, diversity, and inclusion (24%, n=5).

Question 20 asked respondents to rank how they would prefer to be supported to implement the Child Safe Standards. For the 21 respondents to this question, training (76%, n=16) was the most frequently ranked support option, appearing in respondents' top three preferences. This was followed by newsletters (57%, n=12), train-the-trainer programs (48%, n=10), information sessions open to anyone (48%, n=10), and checklists, templates, and guides (38%, n=8)¹.

These findings indicate a preference for practical, implementation-focused support that builds knowledge and capability while providing accessible resources and tools.

Overall, the findings suggest organisations are seeking practical guidance, resources, and training to support implementation, particularly in areas related to children's participation, child-friendly resources, and embedding child safe practices into organisational systems and processes.

Conclusion

The survey findings demonstrate positive progress towards implementation of the ACT Child Safe Standards Scheme across participating organisations.

Awareness of the Scheme is high, and many organisations have taken practical steps to strengthen child-safe policies, practices, and governance arrangements. Leadership support, staff engagement, and access to practical resources were identified as key enablers of implementation, while resource constraints, workforce pressures, and meaningful participation of children and young people remain ongoing challenges.

The findings highlight opportunities for targeted support through training, practical guidance, implementation tools, and resources that assist organisations to embed child-safe practices and strengthen children's participation in decision-making. The survey also identified strong interest in collaborative learning opportunities, including training, awareness-raising activities, and communities of practice.

¹ **Note:** Respondents could rank multiple support options in their top three preferences; therefore, percentages do not total 100%.