



Equity and diverse needs respected and promoted

Child Safe Standard 4



Introduction

All children and young people have the right to feel safe, respected, and included regardless of their background, identity, or circumstances. Upholding this right means taking active steps to promote equity and inclusion so that every child and young person can participate fully and safely in your service.

Recognising diverse identities and experiences

Children and young people thrive in environments where their identities are affirmed, their experiences are valued, and their needs are considered and met. Feeling seen, heard, and understood builds trust and connection, which are critical elements for supporting their rights, safety, and wellbeing.

Your actions, words, and decisions all contribute to creating a place where diversity is celebrated, and every child or young person feels they are valued and belong.

Everyone's right to inclusion

Children and young people experience the world differently due to a range of factors, including their age, culture, disability, gender, sexuality, language, and life experiences. Some face barriers to inclusion or are more likely to experience discrimination, exclusion, or harm. Others may need adjustments or support to participate fully and safely. Some children and young people face multiple barriers, so it is important that we genuinely see, hear, and respect them, holistically.

When organisations promote equity and inclusion, and respect diverse needs, they help to reduce harm and increase children and young people's sense of safety and self-worth. Being inclusive is not just about accommodating difference, it is about embracing it as a strength and making sure your service is safe for everyone, not just for some.



Everyday actions to promote equity

It is important to remember there is no single set of prescriptive actions that mean you are being child safe. Every organisation is different, and staff and volunteers have varied roles and responsibilities. It is therefore important for you to consider actions you can take within your organisation that contribute to *respecting diverse needs and promoting equity and inclusion*.

Small, everyday actions can make a big difference to how safe and supported children and young people feel. From the words you choose to the way you design programs; every decision is a chance to reinforce belonging.



What staff and volunteers can do

- Challenge discriminatory language or behaviour when you see or hear it.
- Reflect on your own biases and seek out opportunities to learn more about cultures, identities, or experiences you are less familiar with.
- Ensure your daily practice affirms the identity of each child or young person you interact with.
- Advocate for accessible spaces, materials, and programs, and talk about any barriers you identify with your team.
- Learn about the histories, strengths, and perspectives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities.
- Check that signage, posters, and displays in your environment reflect the diversity of your community.



No matter your role, your commitment to equity and respect can help each child and young person to feel like they belong, and that their identity is a source of strength.

Affirming Identities and Experiences

This Standard reflects a commitment to uphold the rights of all children and young people and ensure they are safe, respected, and included no matter who they are or where they come from.

The preamble statement to the Standards seeks to affirm the identities and experiences of:

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people, including recognising the impact of colonisation, intergenerational trauma and disadvantage, and systemic racism, while supporting cultural identity and pride.
- Children and young people with disability, including recognising their right to inclusion, communication, safety, and reasonable adjustments.
- LGBTIQ+ children and young people, so they can be themselves and openly express their identity without fear.
- Neurodivergent children and young people, including making adjustments that recognise and respond to 'mainstream' neurotypical biases, and support communication, regulation, and participation.
- Children and young people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, including by providing culturally appropriate support and information in preferred languages.

Creating equitable, inclusive, and culturally safe environments requires more than just policies or training. It involves self-reflection, listening, and building trusting relationships with children and young people (and their families/carers).

When organisations genuinely value and respond to the diverse needs of children and young people, it leads to safer, stronger services. Children and young people learn to trust adults who see them for who they are, and they feel more confident seeking help when something does not feel right.

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