

## 3.1 National Family Works Policy: Child Protection

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### 3.1.1 Policy Statement

The safety and wellbeing of children and young people is the primary concern in all work undertaken by Family Works.

Services to address the safety and wellbeing of children who are Tangata Whenua, are delivered in accordance with the partnership, participation and protection principles inherent in Te Tiriti o Waitangi.

This Family Works Child Protection Policy outlines our commitment to child safety and protection principles, and our legal responsibilities.

The Policy also provides protocols for recognising and responding to actual and suspected cases of abuse (including neglect).

Family Works regions will have their own procedures that best fit the agency setting to meet the requirements of this policy.

### 3.1.2 Outcome

Children and young people, and their families and whānau will receive the services they require in a culturally appropriate way, to maximise their safety and wellbeing and protect them from harm.

### 3.1.3 Scope

This policy applies to all Family Works staff.

### 3.1.4 Definitions:

**Child:** For the purposes of this document, and in Family Works responses to child safety and wellbeing concerns, a child includes children /tamariki and young people/ rangatahi up to the age of 18 years.

**Child abuse and neglect:** Specific types of abuse and neglect are detailed in Section 1.2 of this policy 'Definitions of Child Abuse and Neglect'. Where the term child abuse is used within this policy, this includes neglect.

**Designated Person:** A designated person for child protection will be identified within each Family Works team and any child safety concerns are to be discussed with this person. This role may be the service manager, practice manager or other person appointed by the service manager. If this person is unavailable to consult with, a second liaison person will be identified.

**Staff:** For the purposes of this policy, the term 'staff' refers to all paid Family Works staff, students, contractors and volunteers.

### 3.1.5 Protocols

Children and young people have the right to be safe from abuse and harm, and to be treated with respect and dignity. Family Works is committed to the safety, protection and wellbeing of children, and young people, their families and whānau, and the prevention of child abuse.

This commitment means that:

1. Family Works recognises that the primary role of the family and whānau in caring for and protecting their child/ren, should be valued and maintained, however the welfare and safety of children and young people will be the organisation's primary consideration.
2. Where there are other children in the home who may also be at risk of abuse, staff will assess the risk to them and respond accordingly.
3. When working with individual clients, couples or whānau who have responsibility for the care of children or young people, staff will take into consideration the impact of presenting and underlying issues and any other relevant information, on the safety and wellbeing of those children. Staff will assess the risk and respond appropriately to any concerns identified.
4. Family Works staff will respond to abuse, suspected abuse or disclosure of abuse in a timely fashion and in a manner that best ensures children's immediate and future safety. The expectations for ensuring that any child who discloses abuse is acknowledged and supported, are detailed in the procedures of the region.
5. Staff will follow safe practices in their interactions with children (as per the regional procedures) and work within the parameters of the role they are employed for.
6. Abuse of adults in a parenting role is recognised as having a harmful effect on the children and young people in their care. Family Works staff will assess the risk for adults, children, and young people where abuse is identified.
7. Family Works acknowledges that in cases of suspected child abuse, supporting families and whānau through the report of concern process is important. Staff will provide this wherever possible and appropriate.
8. Family Works will promote alternatives to physical forms of discipline and punishment, and wherever possible ensure families and whānau can access relevant educational opportunities to develop skills and resiliency to support good parenting and manage their lives.
9. Staff working with children, who experience abuse, and their families and whānau, will be competent to do so and will receive supervision and management support to maintain competency.



10. Family Works workplaces and service centres are safe, and child and whānau friendly environments.
11. Family Works supports and collaborates with statutory agencies (the Police, Oranga Tamariki, and DHBs) in the investigation of abuse. Where Children's Teams or collaborative inter-agency responses are in place, Family Works will support and collaborate to assess, triage and respond to vulnerability and risk.
12. Wherever possible and appropriate, Family Works will work in partnership with statutory agencies, other specialist services and any other services involved as part of an integrated plan to increase safety and wellbeing for children and young people and build parenting capacity within families and whānau.
13. Where there are serious concerns about a child, or young person's, risk of abuse, a report of concern will be made to Oranga Tamariki in a timely manner.
14. A designated person will be identified within each Family Works team to oversee actions in relation to any child safety and wellbeing concerns. This may be the service manager, practice manager or other person appointed by the service manager. If this person is unavailable to consult with, a second liaison person will be identified.
15. Staff will discuss any situation where there could be a conflict of interest, with the designated person.
16. No staff member will respond to suspected abuse without consultation with their service manager or designated person, and they will follow all regional child protection procedures.
17. All concerns and information received will be recorded factually as soon as possible. Anything that is an opinion, or a personal concern will be identified and documented as such.
18. All decisions, actions and the reasons for them will be recorded accurately throughout the process of responding to the safety concerns for a child or young person.
19. Staff will have a level of training and competence that enables them to work safely with vulnerable children and their families and whānau. Training will include identifying and working with child abuse and family violence. All staff will have refresher training on a regular basis, with timing for this determined by regional management.