



Child Safe Standard

VERSION 2.0

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Child Safe Standards

Practice Summary

Allay Occupational Therapy provides evidence-based and client-driven services for children, adolescents and adults across multiple regions. Our participants may have developmental delays, disabilities, mental or physical health conditions or injuries. Services are targeted towards the individual needs of each participant linked with our team with the aim of building their quality of lives and wellbeing. We keep all our participants in mind in the delivery of services, practice management and policy design.

The Allay Policy and Procedure Guidelines are a resource for our team of occupational therapists. It outlines Allay's policies and procedures that brings together current research, knowledge and practice strategies. It is reflective of legislative requirements and practice principles outlined in relevant guidelines.

Legislation and practice principles considered were:

- Disability Act 2006
- National Disability Insurance Scheme Quality and Safeguarding Framework
- National Disability Insurance Scheme Rules 2018
- Child Safety Standards

Review of Allay's Policy and Procedure Guidelines occurs every two years to ensure relevancy. This is undertaken by the Principal Occupational Therapist, Associate Principal Occupational Therapist, leadership team and the individual occupational therapists.

Introduction

Allay Occupational Therapy acts to protect children from abuse, and build an environment where children feel respected, valued and encouraged to reach their full potential. Abuse may be child sexual abuse, physical abuse, serious emotional and psychological abuse and serious neglect.

Protection of children has its foundation in a culture of child safety, that is embedded throughout our organisation so that child safety is part of everyone's everyday thinking and practice. All of our occupational therapists aim to demonstrate child safe values, attitudes and behaviours.

Allay Occupational Therapy fosters a culture of openness, inclusiveness and awareness. All of our staff, volunteers and students consider the safety of all children, recognise the importance of cultural safety for Aboriginal children, cultural safety for children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, and the safety of children with a disability.

Child Safe Standard 1: Culture

Allay Occupational Therapy acts to protect children from abuse, and build an environment where children feel respected, valued and encouraged to reach their full potential. This is ensured in the first instance by a culture of child safety embedded throughout our organisation so that child safety is part of everyone's everyday thinking and practice. All of our occupational therapists aim to demonstrate child safe values, attitudes and behaviours.

Allay Occupational Therapy fosters a culture of openness, inclusiveness and awareness. All of our staff, volunteers and students consider the safety of all children, recognise the importance of cultural safety for Aboriginal children, cultural safety for children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, and the safety of children with a disability.

Our Principal Occupational Therapist takes a lead in protecting children from abuse, and is involved in providing direction of all child abuse allegations and risks, and takes responsibility for ensuring an appropriate response.

All allegations of child abuse and child safety concerns are treated very seriously by Allay Occupational Therapy. A strategy to prevent, detect and respond to child abuse risks is implemented. Which includes complying with all legal requirements, including reporting suspicions of child abuse to police and/or child protection.

Allay Occupational Therapy is inclusive to all children and families. In particular:

- Cultural safety for Aboriginal children,
- Cultural safety for children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds,
- The safety of children with a disability.

Child Safe Standard 2: Child Safe Policy or Statement of Commitment

Allay Occupational Therapy has a child safe policy which outlines our commitment to promoting children's wellbeing and protecting children from abuse. Please review for details.

Child Safe Standard 3: Code of Conduct

Allay Occupational Therapy has a code of conduct which specifies the standards of conduct and care required when working and interacting with children. Please review for details.

Child Safe Standard 4: Human Resources

Allay Occupational Therapy utilises robust human resources practices to reduce these risks of harm to children. We achieve this by:

- Providing opportunities for employees and volunteers to develop and maintain skills to ensure child safety. Supporting staff and volunteers to understand the importance of child safety and wellbeing, and enable them to consistently follow child safety policies and procedures.
- Allay Occupational Therapy reinforces a commitment to child safety by recognising the good work and practices of employees and volunteers in keeping children safe and protected.
- Allay Occupational Therapy takes all reasonable steps to ensure that it engages the most suitable and appropriate people to work with children. This includes police record and identity checks, Working with Children Checks where required, interviews and detailed reference checks from previous employers, including from the applicant's most recent line manager.
- Allay Occupational Therapy ensures that volunteers and employees who work with children have ongoing supervision, support and training so that their performance is developed and enhanced to help protect children from abuse.
- Allay Occupational Therapy staff receive induction and ongoing training in child safety. Staff are required to review and sign the Child Safe Code of Conduct.

Child Safe Standard 5: Reporting and responding

Allay Occupational Therapy staff must follow steps for responding and reporting suspected child abuse.

If a child discloses an incident of abuse, Allay Occupational Therapy staff will:

- Listen to them carefully.
- Let the child use their own words to explain what has occurred.
- Reassure the child that you take what they are saying seriously, and it is not their fault and that they are doing the right thing.

- Explain to them that this information may need to be shared others, such as with their parent/carer, specific people in your organisation, or the police.
- Do not make promises to the child such as promising not to tell anyone about the incident, except that you will do your best to keep them safe.
- Do not leave the child in a distressed state. If they seem at ease in your company, stay with them.
- Provide them with an incident report form to complete, or complete it together, if you think the child is able to do this.
- As soon as possible after the disclosure, record the information using the child's words and report the disclosure to your manager, police or child protection.
- Ensure the disclosure is recorded accurately, and that the record is stored securely.

If a parent/carer says their child has been abused at Allay Occupational Therapy or raises a concern:

- Explain that Allay Occupational Therapy has processes to ensure all abuse allegations are taken very seriously.
- Ask about the wellbeing of the child.
- Allow the parent/carer to talk through the incident in their own words.
- Advise the parent/carer that you will take notes during the discussion to capture all details.
- Explain to them the information may need to be repeated to authorities or others, such as the Principal Occupational Therapist, the police or child protection.
- Do not make promises at this early stage, except that you will do your best to keep the child safe.
- Provide them with an incident report form to complete, or complete it together.
- Ask them what action they would like to take and advise them of what the immediate next steps will be.
- Ensure the report is recorded accurately, and that the record is stored securely.

Child Safe Standard 6: Detect and prevent

Allay has strategies to identify and reduce or remove the risk of child abuse. Allay adopts a risk management approach by considering their child safety risk(s) based on the nature of their activities with children, the physical environment, and the characteristics of children to whom we provide services. Allay will take measures that once risks are identified, we will reduce or remove them to help ensure the safety of children.

Allay implements this standard by:

- Ensure a clear and accessible process for evaluating risks posed by situations and activities relevant to the organisation, its size and resources, and the children they work with.
- Developing, recording and communicating clear processes for removing risks to children (e.g. removing staff who may pose a risk).
- Provide staff and volunteers with training in identifying children at risk of abuse and organisational child abuse risks.
- Committed to continual improvement in how risks are managed by learning from past lessons, including policy review and staff training.
- Drive a risk management approach through endorsement and ownership by management, including responsibility for risk identification and management in position descriptions.
- Institute risk management policies and processes including supervision requirements for children by suitable staff.
- Include discussion about apparent risks or 'near misses' in team meetings.
- Encourage early identification and raising awareness of possible risks.
- Roster staff with experience and qualifications to manage high risk environments.

Child Safe Standard 7: Empowering children

Allay Occupational Therapy promotes the participation and empowerment of children. All staff endeavour to create environments where children feel safe and comfortable in reporting concerns or allegations of abuse. Our staff are trained in child focussed therapy and encouraging children's participation. Our staff are trained in hearing and responding appropriately to concerns raised by children.