



Child Protection Policy

<Name of Organization>

(this is a sample Child Protection Policy which has been written specifically to include the requirements under the Pennsylvania Child Protective Services Law. All text in italics is to assist you in writing the policy and should be removed on your final version. Once your agency's policy has been written, it should be reviewed and approved by your agency's solicitor/liability insurance before implementation)

Purpose Statement:

(this section should explain why your organization is creating this policy and what purpose this policy fulfills. The language below is an example of such language, which can be modified to better reflect the purpose for your organization)

<Name of Organization> seeks to provide a safe and secure environment for the children who participate in our programs and activities. By implementing this policy, our goals are to protect the children participating in our organization from any harm and provide a clear path of response for staff and volunteers in the event of suspected abuse or neglect.

Provide a Safe Environment and Adequate Supervision of Children:

(this section should explain what steps your organization will take to ensure there is always a safe environment and adequate supervision of children at your agency. The language below is an example (not all-inclusive), which can be modified to better reflect the rules for your organization. Each of the bullets can be expanded greatly into a more detailed procedure. If you already have these procedures outlined in a different policy, simply reference those policies here).

<Name of Organization> seeks to provide a safe environment and adequate supervision of children by implementing the following:

- Adequate supervision and accountability *(it is important to have two staff or volunteers present with the children for accountability. Further define the child to staff ratio needs.):*

At minimum, two approved staff or volunteers must be present with the children during programs and activities, and remain present until all children are back with their parent/guardian. At least one staff or volunteer must be an adult (age 18 or older).

- Check-In/Check-Out: (***it is recommended that your agency have a procedure in place to check the children in and out of the program and define who the children can be released to. This procedure can be modified/defined by age groups***)
 - Nursery (birth – 2 years)
 - Babies brought to the nursery must be checked in by the parent or guardian, and provide any special instructions and care items needed.
 - At check-in, identification “tags” will be provided and must be produced by the person picking up the child to verify his/her right to take the child.
 - Preschool – age 17
 - Children must be checked in by a parent or guardian
 - At check-in, identification “tags” will be provided and must be produced by the person picking up the child to verify his/her right to take the child.
 - Preschool children will be given nametags which will also identify any allergies they may have.

- Discipline (***it is recommended that your agency have a discipline policy in place which is age appropriate and yet effective without the use or threat of use of corporal punishment, such as 1-2-3 Magic***):

No physical discipline (hitting, slapping) may be used. When a child misbehaves, an adult may use redirection and/or verbal means to guide the child’s behavior.

- Physical touch:

Be sensitive to the way children interpret physical contact. All physical contact should be gentle and appropriate. Children have the right to refuse physical contact.

- Diapering and Bathroom Help (***guidelines for diapering and helping children use the bathroom***)
 - Diapers should be checked once per hour and done at the diapering stations. Never leave a child unattended on the changing table. Wipe down the changing pad after each change with disinfectant wipes.
 - Bathroom help: Children who use the bathroom must be accompanied by an adult. The adult should make sure the restrooms are unoccupied by non-participants before allowing children in the restroom and then remain outside the door. If the child requests help or the parent has noted that the child needs help, leave the door open and assist him or her.

- Snacks and food allergies (***consider making your organization a nut free zone due to severe food allergies***):

Due to severe food allergies, all classrooms are NUT FREE ZONES. Please be sure to check package labels on all snacks to ensure that they are not labeled as “contain”, “may contain” or “manufactured in a facility that also processes” any type of nut or nut oil.

- Accidents, First Aid and Incident Reporting (***explain who can administer first aid, where the first aid materials are kept, who to contact when there is an injury, does an accident/injury report need filled out, etc.***):

All adult staff and volunteers are allowed to administer minor first aid to injuries such as small cuts, bumps, and bruises. Always use gloves when dealing with blood. In case of a more serious injury, deal with the immediate need (i.e. apply pressure to stop the bleeding) and then contact 911 and your supervisor/lead as appropriate to assist. Any time a child is hurt, an accident/injury report needs to be filled out. This form can be found < location > and should be given to < name/position > once completed.

- Breaks for Staff and Volunteers (***policy on how to handle the staff or volunteer who becomes overwhelmed and/or angry while working with the children***):

Sometimes interactions with children can become very frustrating. If you ever find yourself in a situation where you are getting very angry with a child or a class, take a break. Contact your supervisor/leader and ask for a break or ask another classroom to combine classes while you take a break. Ensure you are calm and no longer angry before returning to the children.

Recognize Suspected Child Abuse:

(this section covers the categories of abuse in Pennsylvania Child Protective Services Law and expectations for training of staff and volunteers so they know how to recognize suspected child abuse. Clearly define expectations regarding mandated reporter training – how often to require training, will it be in-person training, online training, etc. Pennsylvania Family Support Alliance (www.pa-fsa.org) is an excellent resource for both in-person and online training. There are some instances in which individuals are required by law to have mandated reporter training – please go to www.keepkidssafe.pa.gov and select “Training for Mandated Reporters” to help you determine who in your organization may be required by law to have this training. It is highly recommended that all mandated reporters at your agency receive regular training, even if they are not required to have the training by law).

The Pennsylvania Child Protective Services Law (CPSL) lays out the following categories of abuse. Staff and volunteers are required by law to report suspected child abuse if they are a mandated reporter. Under the current PA CPSL, most employees and volunteers who work with children are mandated reporters.

Categories of Child Abuse:

- Bodily Injury
- Serious Mental Injury
- Sexual abuse or exploitation
- Serious physical neglect
- Likelihood of bodily injury or sexual abuse
- Medical child abuse (also known as Munchausen by Proxy)
- Per se definitions:
 - Physical violence that endangers the child
 - Restraining or confining the child
 - Shaking a child under one year old
 - Striking a child under one year old
 - Interfering with the breathing of a child
 - Having child present at a meth lab
 - Leaving the child in the care of a sexual offender
- Engaging a child in a severe form of trafficking in persons or sex trafficking (includes sex and labor trafficking)

<Name of Organization> recognizes that mandated reporter training is necessary for staff and volunteers to recognize child abuse and understand how to report it. Therefore, <Name of Organization> will host an in-person training twice a year, with the expectation that all staff and volunteers will attend one of the two trainings offered. New staff and volunteers who have never received mandated reporter training before will be required to take the online training before they begin working with children, if an in-person training is not immediately available.

Report Suspected Child Abuse:

(this section covers how to report suspected child abuse as a mandated reporter under Pennsylvania Child Protective Services Law. For information on who is a mandated reporter within your organization, go to www.pa-fsa.org and click on the “mandated reporter” tab and select “Who are Mandated Reporters”).

Staff and volunteers are required by law to report suspected child abuse if they are a mandated reporter. Under the current PA CPSL, most employees and volunteers who work or volunteer with children are mandated reporters. Being a mandated reporter means that if you suspect that a child is being abused, you must report it.

Reporting Steps:

1. If you suspect child abuse, you must immediately report it!

- a. There are two ways to report it
 - i. Call PA ChildLine at 800-932-0313
 - ii. Make a report online (mandated reporters only) at <https://www.compass.state.pa.us/cwis/public/home>
2. If you make a report by calling ChildLine, you must also complete and mail a Report of Suspected Child Abuse (CY47) form to the investigating agency within 48 hours (form can be found at www.keepkidssafe.pa.gov under “forms”)
3. After making the report, notify <contact person> that you have made a suspected child abuse report.

Selection Process:

(This section covers the requirements your agency will put into place when selecting employees and volunteers to work/volunteer in positions with children. Although some sections (such as the application and personal interview) are not required, the certification section is a requirement under the Pennsylvania Child Protection Services Law (CPSL) for certain employees and volunteers. Those individuals who meet this requirement in the law are required to have criminal, child abuse and (in some instances) FBI certifications in order to work/volunteer with children. To determine who is required by law to have these certifications and if your volunteers qualify for free criminal and child abuse certifications, please go to www.keepkidssafe.pa.gov and select “supporting documents” – there you will find documents which will help you walk through the process of determining who at your organization is required to have these certifications and if the volunteers qualify for free criminal and child abuse certifications. This website also has all the links for obtaining these certifications. A sample of disclosure statements for volunteers who are not required to obtain the FBI certification is also located at www.keepkidssafe.pa.gov under supporting documents. Please know that your agency can always make your policy stricter (but never more relaxed) than what the law requires. Consider including whether or not your agency will cover the cost of the certifications (for those who do not qualify for the free certifications) or if that expense is on the individual applying)

All persons who desire to work/volunteer with the children participating in our programs and activities will be screened. This screening includes the following:

➤ Written Application:

All persons seeking to work with children must complete and sign a written application in a form to be supplied by us. The applications will request basic information from the applicant and will inquire into

previous experience with children, references, as well as disclosure of any previous criminal convictions. The application form will be maintained at <insert location>.

➤ Background Checks:

The following certifications are required:

- Report of criminal history from the Pennsylvania State Police (PSP)
- Child Abuse History Certification from the Department of Human Services (Child Abuse)
- A fingerprint based federal criminal history (FBI) submitted through the Pennsylvania State Police or its authorized agent.
 - This certification is NOT required if the following criteria is met:
 - The position the volunteer is applying for is an unpaid position; AND
 - The volunteer has been a resident of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania for the entirety of the previous 10 years.
 - Volunteers who are not required to obtain the FBI certification because they are applying for an unpaid position and have been continuous resident of Pennsylvania for the past 10 years must swear or affirm in writing that they are not disqualified from service based upon a conviction of an offense under §6344. The statement form is located <provide location>.

➤ Personal Interview:

Upon completion of the application, a face-to-face interview may be scheduled with the applicant to discuss his/her suitability for the position.

Other Considerations:

- ***Consider adding a section regarding how to handle a volunteer or employee who is under investigation for suspected Child Abuse. Please discuss this procedure with your solicitor/liability insurance to ensure it meets all requirements to best cover your agency.***

- ***Consider adding a section (or separate policy) on how to handle participants who are Registered Sex Offenders. Will such participants have restricted access to the children? If the victim also attends an agency program, will the Offender be allowed to attend? Please discuss this with your solicitor/liability insurance to ensure such a policy meets all requirements to best cover your agency.***

2000 Linglestown Rd, Suite 301, Harrisburg, PA 17110
Phone: 717-238-0937 / Fax: 717-238-4315 / Pa. Toll Free: 800-448-4906
Email: info@pa-fsa.org / Website: www.pa-fsa.org / Blog: www.protectpakids.org

The official registration and financial information of Pennsylvania Family Support Alliance may be obtained from the Pennsylvania Department of State by calling toll free within Pennsylvania 1-800-732-0999. Registration does not imply endorsement. Pennsylvania Family Support Alliance is a 501©(3) nonprofit organization – contributions are tax deductible to the fullest extent permitted by law.