



Child Safety Policy

Purpose

At Fun to Talk Speech and Language Pathology the safety and wellbeing of children is our highest priority. We are committed to providing a safe, nurturing, and inclusive environment for all children who access our services. This policy outlines the procedures and guidelines in place to ensure the safety and protection of children from harm, abuse, or neglect.

Scope

This policy applies to all employees, contractors, volunteers, and students involved in the provision of services at Fun to Talk SLP. It covers all interactions with children, whether during speech pathology sessions, assessments, or any other form of engagement with our service

Guiding Principles

Child-Centered Approach: Children's rights, safety, and wellbeing are paramount. All decisions and actions are guided by the best interests of the child.

Zero Tolerance: Fun to Talk SLP has zero tolerance for child abuse and neglect, and takes all allegations seriously

Respect and Inclusivity: All children, regardless of background, ability, or identity, have the right to feel safe and respected

Empowerment: We encourage children to express their concerns, and we respect their views and feelings.

Compliance: This policy aligns with relevant child protection legislation and industry standards, including the Child Safe Standards and Speech Pathology Australia's Code of Ethics

Child Protection Procedures

Recruitment and Training:

- ❖ **Screening:** All staff members, contractors, and volunteers working with children must undergo thorough background checks, including a Working With Children Check (WWCC), a National Police Check, and reference checks.
- ❖ **Training:** Staff members are provided with regular training in child safety, mandatory reporting, and recognizing signs of abuse or neglect
- ❖ **Code of Conduct:** All staff are required to follow a Child Safety Code of Conduct, which outlines acceptable behaviour when interacting with children

Safe Service Delivery

- ❖ **Supervision:** Children are always supervised by a qualified staff member during sessions. Parents or guardians are encouraged to be present, particularly with young children
- ❖ **Environment:** All service locations, whether clinics or homes, are set up to be child-friendly, safe, and accessible
- ❖ **Communication:** Clear, child-appropriate communication is used during all sessions. Children are given the opportunity to participate in decisions about their therapy, where appropriate.

- ❖ Privacy: Children's privacy is respected during therapy sessions, and all personal and medical information is kept confidential in accordance with our confidentiality policy

Managing Allegations and Incidents

- ❖ Reporting: Any staff member who suspects or becomes aware of abuse, neglect, or harm to a child must report the concern to the practice manager or designated child safety officer immediately. All mandatory reporting obligations to child protection authorities will be adhered to
- ❖ Responding to Incidents: If a child discloses abuse or if abuse is suspected, the staff member must:
 - Listen carefully and support the child without asking leading questions.
 - Reassure the child that they are believed, and that they have done the right thing by telling someone
 - Report the disclosure to the designated child safety officer immediately and record the incident accurately
- ❖ Investigation: All allegations will be taken seriously and investigated promptly. Appropriate authorities, including the police and child protection services, will be contacted where necessary.

Empowering Children and Families

Education: We provide children and their families with information about their rights, including the right to feel safe and to be listened to

Feedback and Complaints: Children and their families are encouraged to provide feedback or make complaints without fear of retribution. We ensure all feedback is handled promptly and transparently.

Risk Management

Ongoing Risk Assessments: Regular risk assessments are conducted to identify and minimize potential risks to children in our service environment

Risk Minimization Strategies: Procedures are in place to manage identified risks, including safety checks of the physical environment and ensuring appropriate staff-to-child ratios during services

Child Safe Culture

Open Communication: We foster a culture of openness, where staff, children, and families feel comfortable discussing child safety concerns.

Continuous Improvement: Child safety is continuously monitored and reviewed. Feedback from children, parents, staff, and external audits are used to improve our child safety practices.

Record Keeping

Accurate records are maintained for all child-related services, including:

- ❖ Client records
- ❖ Incident reports
- ❖ Mandatory reporting notifications



These records are stored securely to ensure confidentiality.

Retention and Disposal of Records

Client records are retained for the duration required by law, typically seven years after the client's last contact with the service (or longer if the client is a minor). After this period, records are securely destroyed or deleted in a manner that protects client confidentiality.

Continuous Review and Improvement

This policy is regularly reviewed to ensure it remains effective and compliant with current laws and best practices. Staff are provided with ongoing education to remain up-to-date with child safety requirements.

Contact Information

For concerns related to child safety, please contact our designated Child Safety Officer at:

- ❖ Phone: 0449 555 183
- ❖ Email: info@funtotalkslp.com.au

If you believe a child is in immediate danger, please contact emergency services at 000 or your local child protection agency.