

# Safeguarding

I N T H E E A R L Y Y E A R S

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# Introduction to Safeguarding..

# What is safeguarding?

Protecting children from harm, abuse, neglect, and exploitation while promoting their health, safety, and well-being.

## Why it matters in Early Years Education

- Children are vulnerable due to their age and dependency
- Educators are front-line observers, protectors and advocates
- Safe children = thriving children



# Core Principles of Safeguarding

- ✓ Children's welfare is paramount
- ✓ All children have equal rights to protection
- ✓ Partnerships with families and agencies are essential
- ✓ All staff have a duty of care and responsibility
- ✓ Transparency, accountability, and action are key





# Educator Roles and Responsibilities..

# Educator Responsibilities



### Observe

Changes in behavior, physical signs



### Record

Accurate, factual, confidential notes



### Report

Follow your centre's reporting procedure



### Protect

Create a safe, nurturing environment



# Training and Culture

- ✓ All staff must complete **annual safeguarding training**
- ✓ Culture of **open communication and reflective practice**
- ✓ **Lead Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO)** in every centre
- ✓ Safeguarding discussions included in **staff meetings**



# Types of Abuse to Be Aware Of

Type	Description	Red flags
Physical	Causing physical harm	Unexplained bruises, fear of adults
Emotional	Constant criticism, threats, rejection	Withdrawn, anxious, low self-esteem
Sexual	Inappropriate touching or exposure	Knowledge of sexual behavior inappropriate for age
Neglect	Failing to meet basic needs	Hunger, poor hygiene, medical needs unmet

# Safe Recruitment Practices (EYFS-Aligned)..

# Why safe recruitment matters?

Creating a safeguarding culture starts with hiring. Every person who works with children should be vetted not just for their qualifications, but for their character, behavior, and understanding of safeguarding.



# Key Elements of Safe Recruitment



## Clear Job Descriptions

Include safeguarding responsibilities in all ECE job descriptions.



## Application Screening

Thoroughly review all applications, noting any gaps in employment.



## Two References

At least one from a previous role working with children.



## Police Checks / Criminal Record Checks

**Canada:** Vulnerable Sector Check through RCMP or local police  
**UAE:** Police clearance certificate from home country and UAE (as per KHDA or MOE requirements)



## Structured Interviews

Include **safeguarding scenario questions** to assess values and awareness.



## Qualification & ID Verification

Ensure authenticity of early years credentials, degrees, and IDs.

# Key Elements of Safe Recruitment



### Right to Work Documentation

Confirm valid work permits/visas (especially critical in UAE).



### Application Screening

All new hires undergo a **safeguarding induction** and monitored probation period.



### Ongoing Suitability

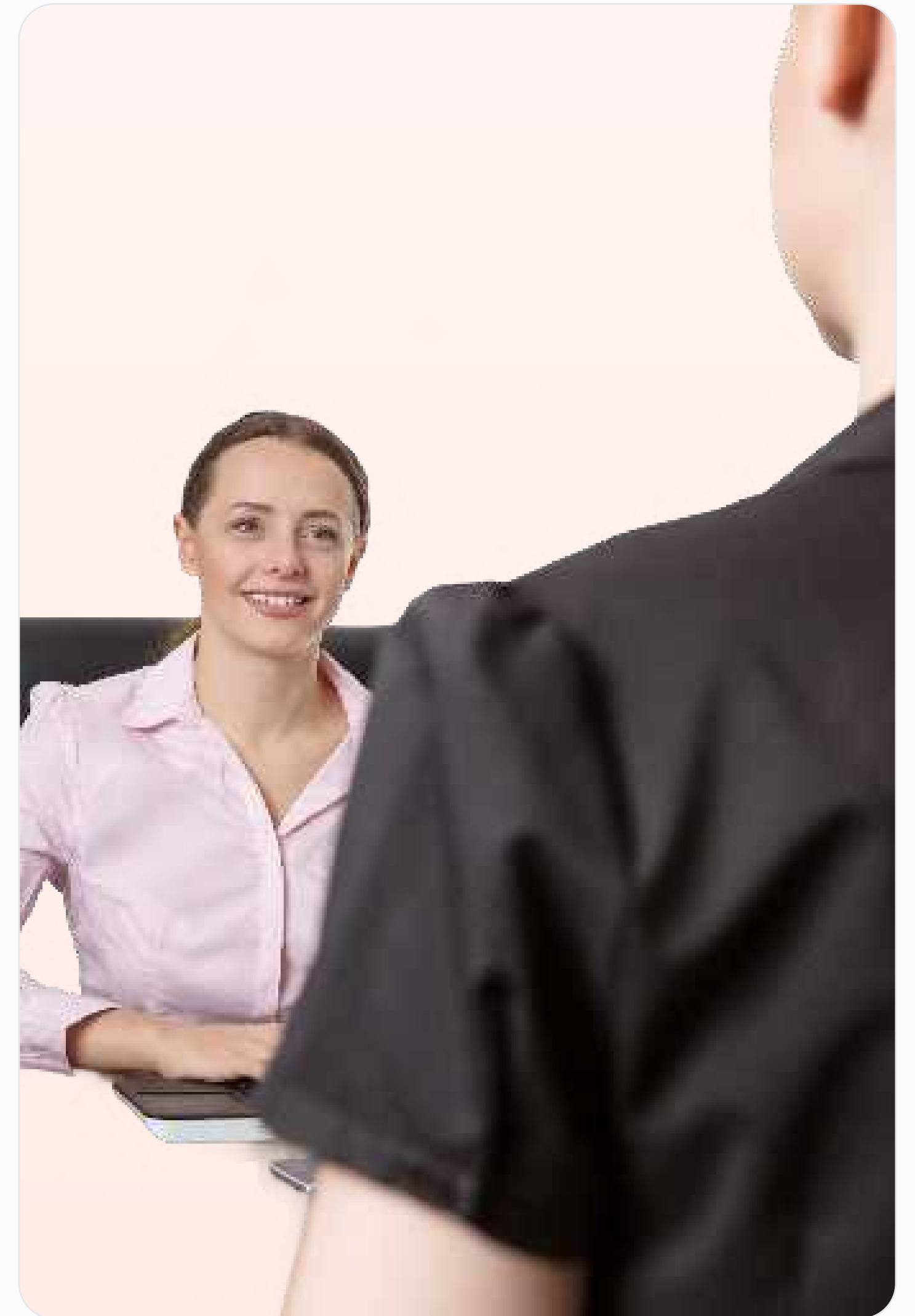
Annual declarations from staff affirming continued suitability to work with children.

# Best Practice Tip

Hiring is the first opportunity to protect children, it sets the tone for everything that follows.

### Maintain a central file for each staff member including:

- ✓ Interview notes
- ✓ Reference checks
- ✓ Police certificates
- ✓ Signed safeguarding agreements
- ✓ Training logs





# Country-Specific Safeguarding Protocols..

# Safeguarding Protocols: Canada 🇨🇦

## Legal Framework

- Governed by **provincial/territorial Child Protection Acts**
- **Mandatory reporting:** All adults must report suspected abuse
- Reports go to local **Children's Aid Society / Child Welfare Authority**

## Steps for Reporting

1. Immediately inform your **Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)**
2. Contact **local child protection services** (can vary by province)
3. Document all concerns and follow up internally

## Resources

- **Ontario:** Children's Aid Society
- **Alberta:** Child Intervention Services
- **British Columbia:** MCFD



# Safeguarding Protocols: UAE 🇦🇪

## Legal Framework

- Governed by **Wadeema's Law** (Federal Law No. 3 of 2016 on Child Rights)
- **Mandatory reporting:** All professionals must report abuse
- Reports go to **Ministry of Interior Child Protection Centre**

## Steps for Reporting

1. ImAlert your **Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)**
2. Report via the **Child Protection Centre hotline: 116111**
3. Notify **KHDA/MOE** if required (for licensed centres)

## Resources

- Dubai Foundation for Women and Children
- Ministry of Interior Child Protection Centre
- Local police when immediate danger is present





# Handling Disclosures & Concerns..

# Handling Disclosures and Concerns

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## Do:

- Stay calm and listen
- Reassure them: "You're safe, I'm here for you."
- Write down exactly what they say (no interpretation)
- Follow centre protocol immediately

## Don't:

- Ask leading questions
- Promise to keep it secret
- Delay reporting

# Documentation Best Practices

- ✓ Use a **secure safeguarding log**
- ✓ Record **date, time, child's exact words**, and observations
- ✓ Avoid assumptions or diagnoses
- ✓ Keep information **confidential and secure**

# Responding to Concerns About Staff

- Any concern about an adult must be taken seriously
- Notify the **centre's DSL** immediately
- If concern involves the DSL, report directly to the **regional child protection authority**
- Suspension during investigation may be appropriate depending on severity





# Partnering with Families & Centre Culture..

# Partnering with Families

- ✓ Build trusting, respectful relationships
- ✓ Share **safety policies** at enrollment
- ✓ Educate parents about **signs of abuse and safe practices**
- ✓ Keep communication open, but always prioritize child welfare in conflicts

# Creating a Safe Environment

- Safe arrival and dismissal protocols
- Staff never alone with a child behind closed doors
- Supervision at all times, including toileting and nap time
- Regular health & safety checks of premises and equipment



## Red Flags in a Centre's Culture

- Fear-based discipline or secrecy
- Staff not understanding or following reporting processes
- Poor record-keeping or confidentiality breaches
- Children afraid to speak or disclose





# Implementation and Reflection..

# Setting Up for Success

## Centre Checklist:

- ✓ Appoint a trained **Designated Safeguarding Lead**
- ✓ Establish clear **reporting procedures**
- ✓ Provide **annual training and refreshers**
- ✓ Display child protection contacts in staff room
- ✓ Conduct **regular safeguarding audits**



# Safeguarding Training Reflection

### Reflection Prompts for Educators:

- Do I know my centre's safeguarding lead?
- Do I feel confident identifying and reporting abuse?
- Are there children I'm worried about right now?
- How can I build stronger safeguarding habits?



# Resources & Key Reminders..

# Resources and Further Training

## Canada 🇨🇦

- Canadian Centre for Child Protection
- [Provincial child protection agencies]

## UAE 🇦🇪

- Ministry of Interior Child Protection Centre
- Dubai Foundation for Women and Children

## Courses:

- Red Cross Child Abuse Prevention
- NSPCC (UK-based but internationally relevant)



# Reminders

- ✓ Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility
  - ✓ Prevention is as important as intervention
  - ✓ Children trust us, let's honor that with vigilance, love, and action
- "Children are not things to be molded, but people to be unfolded." — *Jess Lair*



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