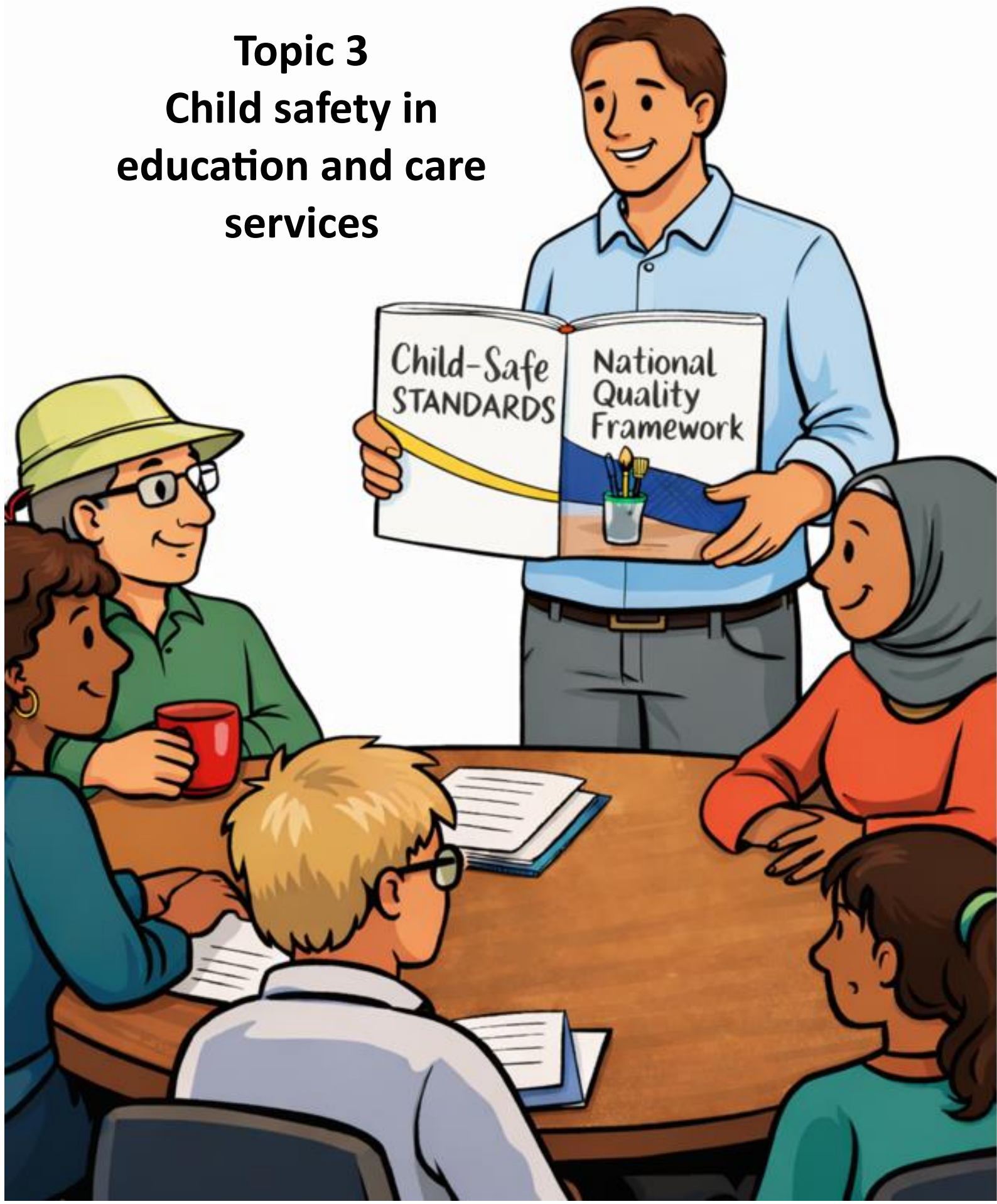


Topic 3 Child safety in education and care services



The National Child Safety Training aims to enhance safety for children and strengthen child-safe culture across the education and care sector by introducing shared language, responsibilities, and understanding. The training was developed in partnership between Australian Centre for Child Protection (ACCP) and the Queensland Government on behalf of Australian governments.

The first level of training, Foundations of Child Safety, includes two eLearning courses:

- **Course 1:** Understanding Child Safety
- **Course 2:** Understanding and Identifying Child Abuse and Neglect

To complement the mandatory eLearning courses, a suite of non-mandatory Community of Practice resources has been developed to extend learning and support the application of knowledge in education and care settings. Whilst the Community of Practice are a voluntary component of the National Child Safety Training, they provide structured opportunities for discussion, reflection, and shared learning over time, helping staff build confidence and consistency in practice.

These resources contain prompts and suggested activities aligned with each course topic. They are designed to be flexible and may be selected, adapted, shortened, or revisited to suit different service types, team sizes, and meeting formats. The intention is to support practical conversations, not to prescribe a fixed program. There is no expectation that all topics and activities will be used and it is at your discretion how you use these resources.

Child safety is everyone's responsibility in places where children learn and grow. Harm can affect a child's wellbeing, learning, and development throughout childhood, and its impacts can continue into adulthood. When child safe practices are not in place, children are more at risk of harm.

By completing the mandatory eLearning training alongside some non-mandatory Community of Practice activities, you can strengthen your understanding of your role in protecting children, responding to concerns, and supporting a child safe environment in your service.



Australian
Centre for
Child Protection



Queensland
Government

Child safety in education and care services

Topic 3 focuses on understanding how child safety is supported through the laws, regulations, standards and frameworks that guide education and care services across Australia. These systems work together to help services prevent harm, respond to concerns, and keep children's safety and wellbeing at the centre of everyday practice.

For many people, the terms can feel complex or overwhelming. This topic is about building a shared, practical understanding of what these systems are, and how they fit together.

This topic supports participants to:

- Understand what the National Quality Framework (NQF) is and how the National Law, National Regulations, National Quality Standard (NQS) and Approved Learning Frameworks fit together
- How these relate to the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations (National Principles)
- How the National Principles can be applied in practice in education and care settings.




Reminder

You **do not** need to run all three activities.

Select, adapt, shorten, or spread activities across sessions to suit your group and available time.

Activities can also be adapted for one-on-one supervision, mentoring conversations, or team meetings. You may choose to use a single scenario, question, or reflective prompt to guide discussion.

These activities are designed to be flexible and responsive to your service context.

Activity 1: Making sense of the system	
Objective	This activity helps participants understand how the different parts of the National Quality Framework fit together and what each part is responsible for.
Time	30-40 minutes
Format	
Materials needed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Making sense of the system worksheet • Pens



Activity plan

Facilitator preamble

“Many people work in education and care for years without being shown how all the pieces fit together. This activity is about making the system clearer, not more complicated.”

Step 1: Set the frame (5 minutes)

- Explain to participants that this activity is about understanding how the system fits together, not about memorising laws or policy language.
- Briefly introduce the National Quality Framework using plain language.
- Explain that the National Quality Framework provides a national approach to regulation, assessment and quality improvement for education and care services across Australia.
- Explain that the National Quality Framework includes the National Law, National Regulations, National Quality Standard (NQS) and the two National Approved Learning frameworks for the education and care sector:
 - National Law and National Regulations set the *minimum legal requirements* that approved providers, nominated supervisors, and staff must follow to keep children safe.
 - National Quality Standard (NQS) describes what *quality practice* looks like in education and care services.
 - Approved Learning Frameworks guide *how children learn, develop, and experience safety and wellbeing* through everyday practice.
- Reinforce that:
 - Everyone working in education and care services is expected to have a basic understanding of these areas.
 - Different roles may interact with them in different ways.
 - The worksheet will help translate these ideas into real practice.

Step 2: Group exercise using the worksheet (20 minutes)

- Place participants into small groups of 3 – 4 and provide each group with the worksheet.
- Ask groups to work through the worksheet one section at a time, using the prompts provided.
- Guide participants to:
 - Discuss what each part of the system means in practice.
 - Write short dot points or examples, rather than policy or legal wording.
 - Draw on everyday situations they recognise from their own service.
- Emphasise:
 - There are no right or wrong answers.
 - Groups do not need to complete every prompt perfectly.
 - The focus is on making sense of the system, not expertise.
- If groups are unsure, remind them: *“You’re not being asked to explain the law, you’re being asked how it shows up in day-to-day work.”*
- Walk around and engage with groups as they complete the worksheet.

**Facilitator tip**

If discussion becomes focused only on compliance or “what we must do,” gently prompt with: *“How does this support children’s safety and wellbeing, not just rules or processes?”*

Step 3: Whole-group reflection and connection (10-15 minutes)

- Bring the whole group back together.
- Invite participants to discuss their answers. Use the facilitators reference guide to support discussion if needed.
- You can also prompt discussion using the following prompts:
 - *Which part of the system felt most familiar or clear?*
 - *Which part felt more confusing or less visible in everyday practice?*
- As groups share, help draw connections between:
 - Legal requirements and everyday decisions.
 - Quality standards and reflective practice.
 - Children’s learning, wellbeing, and feeling safe.





Online adaptation (MS Teams or Zoom)

This activity can be delivered online using breakout rooms and a shared digital worksheet. The purpose remains the same: to help participants understand how the system fits together in everyday practice, rather than memorising legislation or policy language.

Platform preparation (before the session)

- Upload the Making Sense of the System Worksheet to a shared document platform or provide a downloadable version.
- Prepare a slide briefly outlining the three parts of the system.
- Set up breakout rooms for small groups of 3-4 participants.

Ensure links to shared documents are accessible before the session begins.

Step 1: Create psychological safety

- Begin with a brief facilitator preamble.
- Remind participants that this is about understanding and connection, not expertise.
- Reinforce that responses should remain practice-focused and de-identified.
- Encourage cameras on or off based on comfort.

Step 2: Set the frame

- Share your screen and introduce the three parts of the system using plain language.
- National Law and Regulations set the minimum legal requirements that approved providers, nominated supervisors, and staff members individuals must follow to keep children safe.
- The National Quality Standard describes what quality practice looks like in education and care services.

- Approved Learning Frameworks guide how children learn, develop, and experience safety and wellbeing through everyday interactions, routines, and learning experiences.
- Explain that everyone is expected to have a basic understanding of these areas, although different roles interact with them differently.
- Clarify that the worksheet will help translate these system elements into everyday decisions and actions.

Step3: Breakout group exercise

- Place participants into breakout rooms.
- Share the link to the digital worksheet in the chat before opening rooms.
- Ask each group to work through the worksheet one section at a time.
- Instruct groups to discuss what each part of the system looks like in practice and to write short dot points or examples in the shared document.
- Encourage participants to focus on everyday situations they recognise in their service rather than policy wording.
- Remind participants that there are no right or wrong answers and they do not need to complete every prompt perfectly.
- If needed, broadcast a reminder message: *"You're not being asked to explain the law. You're being asked how it shows up in day-to-day work."*
- Move between breakout rooms to clarify instructions and keep discussion grounded in practice.
- Provide a one-minute warning before closing breakout rooms.

Step 4: Whole-group reflection and connection

- Bring participants back to the main room.
- Share the completed worksheet on screen.
- Invite volunteers to briefly describe one example their group discussed.
- Use prompts such as:
 - *Which part of the system felt most familiar or clear?*
 - *Which part felt less visible in everyday practice?*

- Close by reinforcing that understanding the system strengthens confidence and supports consistent child-safe practice across roles.





Worksheet: Making sense of the system

Making sense of the system: From framework to practice

This activity helps participants connect the different parts of the National Quality Framework (NQF) to everyday practice. The focus is on how these systems support child safety in real situations, not on memorising legislation or policy language.

As a group, work through each section below. Use short dot points or examples from everyday practice.

Section 1

National Law and National Regulations (Minimum legal requirements – what must happen)

In your own words:

What responsibilities do the National Law and National Regulations place on approved providers, nominated supervisors, and staff to ensure children's safety? Consider areas such as reporting obligations, supervision requirements, staffing arrangements, behaviour guidance, and record keeping.

Everyday practice examples:

Identify at least one clear action or responsibility that educators are required to carry out under the National Law or National Regulations.

Describe one situation where the National Law or National Regulations would shape or guide your decision-making in practice.

How does the National Law and National Regulations provide clear direction and reduce uncertainty when child safety concerns arise? (For example, they give educators and leaders guidance about what actions must be taken and who is responsible.).

Section 2

National Quality Standard (NQS)

(Quality expectations – what good practice looks like)

In your own words:

How does the NQS raise the standard beyond “minimum compliance”?

Everyday practice examples:

One way the NQS supports children’s safety or wellbeing:

One Quality Area that feels most connected to child safety in your service:

How does the NQS encourage reflection and improvement, not just rule-following?

Section 3

Bringing it together

Complete the statements below:

One way these systems work together to protect children is:

One thing that feels clearer about child safety responsibilities after this discussion:

One question we still have about laws, regulations, standards, or frameworks:



Facilitator reference guide: Making sense of the system – From framework to practice

This guide provides example responses and discussion prompts to support facilitation of the worksheet activity. The answers provided are not an exhaustive list and not the only correct way to respond. Participants may offer different examples based on their role, service type, state or territory, and experience. These contributions should be welcomed and explored.

Section 1

National Law and National Regulations

(Minimum legal requirements - what must happen).

The primary legal obligations and offences under the National Law and National Regulations largely apply to Approved Providers, Nominated Supervisors, and family day care educators. Some provisions also apply directly to staff members and volunteers, particularly those relating to inappropriate discipline or conduct toward children. Approved Providers must ensure appropriate policies, procedures, and systems are in place, and that staff understand and follow them.

An overarching principle of the National Law is that the safety, health and wellbeing of children are paramount.

What this usually means in practice:

- Clear legal duties related to supervision, staffing, behaviour guidance, record keeping, and reporting.
- Requirements to follow approved policies and procedures.
- Clear roles for approved providers, nominated supervisors, and educators.
- Everyday practice examples participants may raise.
- Reporting a concern rather than managing it alone.
- Following procedures for toileting, sleep, supervision, and physical contact.
- Documenting observations factually and promptly.

- Ensuring ratios and supervision are maintained, even during busy times.
- Knowing who to contact when a concern arises.

Facilitator prompt if groups get stuck: “If something went wrong in your service, which rules would guide what happens next?”

Key takeaway to reinforce: The National Law and Regulations reduce guesswork by setting clear, non-negotiable safety expectations.

Section 2:

National Quality Standard (NQS)

(Quality expectations – what good practice looks like)

What this usually means in practice:

- Moving beyond compliance toward reflective, child-centred practice.
- Focus on relationships, leadership, environments, and continuous improvement.
- Clear links between child safety, wellbeing, and quality education.

Everyday practice examples participants may raise:

- Educators taking time to listen to children even when busy.
- Leaders creating space for child safety discussions in team meetings.
- Safe, predictable routines that support wellbeing.
- Quality Area 2 (Children’s Health and Safety) guiding everyday decisions.
- Quality Area 5 (Relationships with Children) shaping respectful interactions.

Common Quality Areas linked to child safety:

- QA2 - Children’s health and safety
- QA5 - Relationships with children
- QA7 - Governance and leadership

Facilitator prompt: “How does this go beyond ‘must do’ and describe ‘good practice’?”

Key takeaway to reinforce: The NQS describes how safety and wellbeing are demonstrated in everyday practice, not just documented in policies.

Section 3:

Bringing It Together

(How the system works as a whole)

Common ways participants describe the connection:

- The National Law and National Regulations set the rules.
- The NQS sets the quality benchmark.
- Together, they support prevention, early response, and wellbeing.

Insights participants often name:

- Greater clarity about who does what.
- Increased confidence to speak up.
- Understanding that child safety is shared, not individual
- Recognition that safety, wellbeing, and learning are inseparable.

Common questions that may remain:

- State-based differences in reporting.
- Role-specific responsibilities.
- Where to find guidance when unsure.

Facilitator reassurance: “Not having all the answers is normal. Safe practice means knowing where to look, who to ask, and how to act when something doesn’t feel right.”

Direct participants to the appropriate websites.

Activity 2: National Principles applied to the National Quality Standard	
Objective	This activity supports participants to explore how the National Principles connect to the relevant Quality Areas of the National Quality Standard and explore examples of how the National Principles can be applied in practice at multiple levels of a service to enhance child safety and wellbeing.
Time	40–60 minutes
Format	
Materials needed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scenario Cards • Pens • Paper



Activity plan

Facilitator preamble

“The National Principles and the National Quality Standard (NQS) help keep children safe and support their wellbeing in education and care services. The National Principles and the NQS work together to help create a strong child safe culture where children’s safety and wellbeing come first.”

Step 1: Introduce the National Principles

- Begin by reminding the group of the ten National Principles for Child Safe Organisations. (Optional: you can provide participants with a printed hand out of the principles to read through together)
- As a large group, ask participants to reflect on what quality areas of the NQS relate most closely to each of these National Principles. (Optional: you can provide participants with a printed poster of the 7 quality areas available here: https://www.acecqa.gov.au/sites/default/files/2026-01/National%20Quality%20Standard%20Handout%20-%20January%202026_0.pdf)

Step 2: Scenario work – unpacking how the National Principles and related NQS Quality Areas can be applied in practice to enhance child safety and wellbeing.

- Divide participants into small groups of 3-4 and provide one scenario per group.
- Advise participants each scenario card includes a National Principle and related NQS quality areas.
- Ask groups to read the scenario and review the National Principles and NQS Quality Areas listed on the scenario card.
- Ask groups to consider the scenario and discuss what actions the staff member, and others at different levels of the service, could take to strengthen child safety. Remind them to keep the National Principles and NQS Quality Areas listed on their scenario card in mind during the discussion.

Step 3: Whole group discussion (10-15 minutes)

- Invite each group to share their scenario with the whole group and outline some practical actions they identified that could strengthen child safety in that situation.
- Encourage other participants to identify which National Principles or NQS Quality Areas are reflected in the actions discussed.
- Re-enforce to participants that strengthening child safety is a shared responsibility across the service. The National Principles and the NQS provide a framework and standard that helps guide everyday decisions, actions and conversations that protect children.





Online adaptation (MS Teams or Zoom)

This activity can be delivered online using breakout rooms, shared scenario documents, and collaborative tools such as a shared document or whiteboard. The purpose remains the same: to help participants think of practical ways to apply the National Principles and related quality areas of the NQS to case scenarios to enhance child safety and wellbeing.

Platform preparation (before the session)

- Upload the Scenario Cards to a shared document or slide deck.
- Prepare breakout rooms for small groups of 3-4 participants.
- Create a shared document or whiteboard template with space for groups to record key points.
- Ensure all links are ready before the session begins.

Step 1: Create Psychological Safety

- Begin with a short facilitator preamble.
- Reinforce that examples must remain de-identified and practice focused.
- Encourage cameras on or off based on comfort.

Step 2: Introduce the National Principles and re-enforce shared responsibility for implementation.

- Remind participants that this activity is about reflecting on practical ways we can implement the National Principles and NQS Quality areas to enhance child safety and wellbeing in different case scenarios. The scenarios are deliberately brief to provide opportunity for reflection and discussion on the different actions that could be taken at different levels of the service to apply the principles and enhance child safety.
- Explain that implementing the National Principles requires action across different levels of the service and shared responsibility among staff in a range of roles.

- Use a brief explanation such as: *“In practice, implementing the National Principles and meeting the NQS Quality Areas related to child safety and wellbeing is not the responsibility of one person alone. A single situation often involves actions at multiple levels of a service, with educators, leaders, systems and policies all playing a role. When these layers work together effectively, children are better protected and staff feel more confident and supported.”*
- Briefly remind participants of the ten National Principles for Child Safe Organisations. Share your screen with a slide or document showing the principles so participants can read them together. You may also place a link to the principles in the chat for participants to open on their own device.
- Next share the NQS Quality Areas on screen (or provide a link to the ACECQA handout: <https://www.acecqa.gov.au/sites/default/files/2026-01/National%20Quality%20Standard%20Handout%20-%20January%202026%200.pdf>).
- Invite participants to reflect as a whole group on which NQS Quality Areas relate most closely to each National Principle.
- Facilitate discussion by asking participants to contribute verbally, use the chat, or respond using reactions or polling tools.

Step 3: Breakout scenario work – unpacking how the National Principles and NQS Quality Areas can be applied in practice to enhance child safety and wellbeing.

Place participants into breakout rooms.

- Share one scenario per group via chat or shared document before opening the rooms.
- Ask groups to read the scenario and review the National Principles and NQS Quality Areas listed on the scenario card.
- Ask groups to consider the scenario and discuss what actions the staff member, and others at different levels of the service, could take to strengthen child safety in this scenario. Remind them to keep the National Principles and NQS Quality Areas listed on their scenario card in mind during the discussion.

Step 4: Share and consolidate learning

- Return all breakout rooms to the main group.
- Invite each group to share their scenario with the whole group and outline some practical actions they identified that could strengthen child safety in that situation.
- Encourage other participants to identify which National Principles or NQS Quality Areas are reflected in the actions discussed.
- Close by reinforcing to participants that strengthening child safety is a shared responsibility across the service. The National Principles and the NQS provide a framework and quality standard that helps guide everyday decisions, actions and conversations that protect children.



Scenario cards: National Principles applied to the National Quality Standard

For printing. These scenarios are designed to help participants identify ways they can apply the National Principles and related quality areas of the NQS to practice scenarios to increase child safety and wellbeing.

Facilitators are also encouraged to adapt these scenarios or develop their own to reflect their service, context, or community, while ensuring all examples remain de-identified.

Scenario 1:

National Principle 6: Processes to respond to complaints and concerns are child focused

NQS: Quality Area 6 – Collaborative partnerships with families and communities

A parent approaches an educator at pick-up and says they are unhappy with how their child was spoken to earlier in the day. The educator feels caught off guard and unsure how to respond in the moment.

Scenario 2:

National Principle 1 – Child safety and wellbeing is embedded in organisational leadership, governance and culture

Quality Area 5 – Relationships with children

Quality Area 7 – Governance and leadership

A new staff member asks during lunch break whether it's okay for a child to sit on their lap during rest time. Staff give different answers and the new staff member is left feeling unsure.

Scenario 3:

National Principle 8: Physical and online environments promote safety and wellbeing while minimising the opportunity for children and young people to be harmed.

Quality Area 2: Children's health and safety

During rest time, an educator notices that one room has reduced visibility due to furniture placement.

Scenario 4:

National Principle 2: Children and young people are informed about their rights, participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously.

Quality Area 5: Relationships with children

Quality Area 2: Children's health and safety

A child tells an educator they don't like going into the bathroom with a particular staff member. The child doesn't explain why.

Scenario 5:

National Principle 2: Children and young people are informed about their rights, participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously.

Quality Area 2: Children's health and safety

Quality Area 5: Relationships with children

Several children repeatedly exclude one child from play. Staff notice the child becoming withdrawn over time, but no single incident seems serious on its own.

Scenario 6:

National Principle 7: Staff and volunteers are equipped with the knowledge, skills and awareness to keep children and young people safe through ongoing education and training.

Quality Area 2: Children's health and safety

Quality Area 7: Governance and leadership

A casual educator is unsure who they should talk to if they are worried about a child, as they work across multiple services and processes differ.

Scenario 7:

National Principle 8: Physical and online environments promote safety and wellbeing while minimising the opportunity for children and young people to be harmed.

National Principle 6: Processes to respond to complaints and concerns are child focused.

Quality area 2: Children’s health and safety

Quality area 7: Governance and leadership

A staff member notices another educator using their personal phone in a way that doesn’t align with the service’s safe use of digital devices policy or the National Law.

Scenario 8:

National Principle 3: Families and communities are informed and involved in promoting child safety and wellbeing.

Quality Area 6: Collaborative partnerships with families and communities

A family asks why the service needs so much personal information about their child and how it is kept safe. The educator isn’t sure how to explain this clearly.

Scenario 9:

National Principle 1: Child safety and wellbeing is embedded in organisational leadership, governance and culture.

National Principle 8: Physical and online environments promote safety and wellbeing while minimising the opportunity for children and young people to be harmed.

Quality Area 2: Children’s health and safety

Quality Area 4: Staffing arrangements

Quality area 7: Governance and leadership

Due to staff shortages, routines are rushed. An educator worries supervision isn’t as strong during transitions but feels pressure to “just manage.”

Scenario 10:

National Principle 7: Staff and volunteers are equipped with the knowledge, skills and awareness to keep children and young people safe through ongoing education and training.

National Principle 10: Policies and procedures document how the organisation is safe for children and young people.

Quality area 2: Children’s health and safety

Quality area 7: Governance and leadership

An educator notices something that feels off but isn’t sure if it’s “serious enough” to raise. They worry about being seen as overreacting.

Scenario 11:

National Principle 9: Implementation of the national child safe principles is regularly reviewed and improved.

National Principle 10. Policies and procedures document how the organisation is safe for children and young people

Quality area 7: Governance and leadership

A service is preparing for assessment and rating. Child safety documentation is updated quickly, but staff haven't had time to discuss changes together.

Scenario 12:

National Principle 1: Child safety and wellbeing is embedded in organisational leadership, governance and culture.

National Principle 8: Physical and online environments promote safety and wellbeing while minimising the opportunity for children and young people to be harmed.

Quality area 2: Children's health and safety

Quality area 4: Staffing arrangement

Quality area 5: Relationships with children

Quality area 7: Governance and leadership

Photos of children from a recent event are shared internally. A staff member is unsure whether consent was properly checked.

Scenario 13:

National Principle 2: Children and young people are informed about their rights, participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously

Quality area 4: Staffing arrangements

Quality area 5: Relationships with children

Different rooms respond differently when children say “no” to physical contact. Some staff redirect immediately; others dismiss it as play.

Scenario 14: New policy rollout

National Principle 5: People working with children and young people are suitable and supported to reflect child safety and wellbeing values in practice.

Quality area 7: Governance and leadership

A new child safe environment policy has been added to the staff handbook, but several educators say they haven’t had time to read it yet.



Scenario 15:

National Principle 3: Families and communities are informed and involved in promoting child safety and wellbeing.

National Principle 4: Equity is upheld and diverse needs respected in policy and practice

Quality area 6: Collaborative partnerships with families and communities

A family requests a practice that conflicts with the service's child safe environment policy. Staff feel unsure how to respond respectfully.

Activity 3: Regulation in action	
Objective	<p>This activity supports participants to build confidence in navigating child safety laws, regulations and standards by helping them to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand the difference between frameworks, laws, regulations and standards. • Identify which requirements apply to their role and jurisdiction. • Practise finding information. • Normalise asking questions and checking obligations when unsure.
Time	30-45 minutes
Format	<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; align-items: center;"> <div style="text-align: center;"> <p><i>Small Group Activity</i></p>  </div> <div style="text-align: center;"> <p><i>Whole Group Activity</i></p>  </div> </div>
Materials needed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ National Quality Framework overview ○ National Quality Standard summary ○ Relevant state or territory child safe standards or legislation • Printed excerpts, screenshots, or links (choose what suits your group) • Scenario cards



Activity plan

Facilitator preamble

“Child safety laws and standards can feel complex, especially when they’re described using different language. This activity isn’t about testing your knowledge. It’s about getting comfortable finding your way. Knowing where to look, who to ask, and how to check what applies in your state or territory.”

Remind participants

- No one is expected to memorise legislation
- Different states and territories have different requirements
- This is a learning and discussion activity
- It’s okay to say, ‘I’m not sure’ and look it up together

Step 1: Set the scene (5 minutes)

- Briefly explain, in plain language:
 - Frameworks set the overall approach. The National Quality Framework (NQF) provides one system to check and improve education and care services across Australia. The NQF includes the National Law, National Regulations, National Quality Standard (NQS) and the two National Approved Learning frameworks for the education and care sector.
 - The National Law and National Regulations set out the minimum legal requirements. They outline the legal responsibilities of approved providers, nominated supervisors and staff members.
 - The National Quality Standard (NQS) sets the quality standard for children’s safety, health, wellbeing and education in education and care services. It describes what high-quality education and care should look like in practice.
 - The National Principles help organisations to understand why child safety is important and how they can build a child safe culture. All state and territory governments across Australia endorsed the

National Principles and made a commitment to their implementation

- Child Safe Standards: Many states and territories have used the National Principles to develop standards and have created laws to enforce these child safe standards.
- Reassure participants that: *"You don't need to know everything. Safe practice means knowing where to look, who to ask, and how to act when something doesn't feel right."*

Step 2: Jurisdiction focus – What applies where we work? (10-15 minutes)

- In small groups of 3-4 participants (or as a whole group if small), ask participants to identify:
 - Which state or territory they work in
 - Any child safe standards and/or reportable conduct schemes that apply there
 - Any legislation including child protection laws.
 - One place they could go to check requirements (e.g., regulatory authority website, service policy, supervisor)
- Prompt with questions such as:
 - *"Where would you look if you needed to check a child safety requirement tomorrow?"*
 - *"Who in your service usually helps clarify this?"*
- Groups record brief notes.

Step 3: Regulation in action (15 minutes)

- Give each group one scenario prompt.
- Ask groups to discuss the scenarios and answer the reflection questions on the scenario card.
- Encourage examples like:
 - *"This tells us we need to document..."*
 - *"This means we don't manage this alone..."*
 - *"This explains why we follow this process..."*

Step 4: Whole-group reflection (5–10 minutes)

- Invite groups to share:
 - One thing that feels clearer now
 - One place they would go for guidance if unsure

**Facilitator tip**

If discussion drifts into technical detail, gently refocus by asking: *“How does this help keep children safe in everyday practice?”*





Online adaptation (MS Teams or Zoom)

This activity can be delivered online using breakout rooms, shared links, and collaborative tools. The purpose remains the same: to build confidence navigating child safety frameworks and legislation without expecting participants to memorise legal detail.

Platform preparation (before the session)

- Upload or link to a National Quality Framework overview, National Quality Standard summary, and relevant state or territory child safe standards or legislation.
- Prepare the scenario cards in a shared document or slide deck.
- Set up breakout rooms for small groups of 3-4 participants.
- If possible, prepare a shared document or whiteboard for groups to record short notes.

Ensure all links are ready before the session begins.

Step 1: Create psychological safety

- Begin with a short facilitator preamble.
- Remind participants that no one is expected to memorise legislation.
- Acknowledge that different states and territories have different requirements.
- Clarify that this is a learning and discussion activity, not a test of knowledge
- Normalise uncertainty by stating that it is appropriate to say, "I'm not sure," and look it up together.

Step 2: Set the scene – What are we looking at?

- Share your screen and briefly explain in plain language:
 - Frameworks set the overall approach. The National Quality Framework (NQF) provides one system to check and improve education and care services across Australia. The NQF includes the National Law, National Regulations, National Quality Standard (NQS) and the two National Approved Learning frameworks for the education and care sector. The National Law and National Regulations set out the minimum legal requirements. They outline the legal responsibilities of approved providers, nominated supervisors and staff members. The National Quality Standard (NQS) sets the quality standard for children’s safety, health, wellbeing and education in education and care services. It describes what high-quality education and care should look like in practice.
 - The National Principles help organisations to understand why child safety is important and how they can build a child safe culture. All state and territory governments across Australia endorsed the National Principles and made a commitment to their implementation
 - Child Safe Standards: Many states and territories have used the National Principles to develop standards and have created laws to enforce these child safe standards. State or territory legislation explains how this applies locally.
- Reassure participants by stating: *“You don’t need to know everything. You need to know where to look and who to ask.”*
- Pause briefly and invite participants to type one word in the chat that describes how they currently feel about navigating legislation.

Step 3: Jurisdiction focus – What applies where we work?

- Place participants into breakout rooms or remain as a whole group if numbers are small.
- Share relevant links in the chat before opening breakout rooms.
- Ask participants to identify:
 - Which state or territory they work in.
 - Which child safe standards or legislation apply there.

- One place they could go to check requirements, such as a regulatory authority website, service policy, or supervisor.
- Encourage groups to record brief notes in a shared document or nominate one person to report back.
- Prompt with questions such as:
 - Where would you look if you needed to check a child safety requirement tomorrow?
 - Who in your service usually helps clarify this?
- Send a one-minute warning before closing breakout rooms.

Regulation in action

- Keep participants in breakout rooms or reassign groups if needed.
- Share one scenario prompt per group via chat or shared document.
- Ask groups to read the scenario and discuss how frameworks, standards, or legislation guide action.
- Encourage them to frame responses in practical language, such as:
 - *"This tells us we need to document..."*
 - *"This means we don't manage this alone..."*
 - *"This explains why we follow this process..."*
- Remind participants that the focus is on understanding how the system supports practice, not quoting legislation word-for-word.

Step 4: Whole-group reflection

- Bring participants back to the main room.
- Invite each group to share one insight, either verbally or in the chat.
- Ask participants to reflect on:
 - One thing that feels clearer now.
 - One place they would go for guidance if unsure.
- Summarise common themes that emerge, reinforcing that child safety systems are designed to support consistent, shared action across roles.
- Close by highlighting that knowing where to look and who to ask is a professional strength, not a gap in knowledge.



Scenario cards: Regulation in action

For printing. These scenarios are intentionally brief and incomplete to prompt discussion and reflection. Facilitators are also encouraged to adapt these scenarios or develop their own to reflect their service, context, or community, while ensuring all examples remain de-identified.

Responding to a child safety concern

An educator notices that a child has become increasingly withdrawn over several weeks. The child often arrives tired and hungry and has stopped joining group activities. Nothing has been disclosed, but the educator feels uneasy.

Discussion focus

- What guidance or requirements help us to decide what to do next? (think about principles, laws, regulations or standards)
- What does “early response” look like here?
- Who supports the educator to act appropriately?

Managing a concern about staff conduct

An educator notices a colleague frequently being alone with the same child in low-visibility areas. The behaviour doesn't clearly break a rule, but it doesn't feel right.

Discussion focus

- What guidance or requirements help us to decide what to do next? (think about principles, laws, regulations or standards)
What policies or processes protect everyone involved?
- How does shared responsibility show up here?

Responding to a child disclosure

During free play, a child quietly tells an educator, "I don't like going home sometimes." They don't say why and then return to playing.

Discussion focus

- What guidance or requirements help us to decide what to do next? (think about principles, laws, regulations or standards)
What should happen straight away, and what should happen next?

How do policies and processes protect the child and the educator?

Managing a complaint from a family

A parent raises a complaint that their child feels scared of a staff member who “yells a lot.” The parent is upset but doesn’t want to make things worse.

Discussion focus

- What guidelines or requirements guide how complaints are handled?
- How is the child’s voice kept central?
- What systems ensure this is taken seriously and followed up?

Ensuring safe supervision

During outdoor play, part of the yard is hard to supervise because of equipment placement. Staff manage as best they can, but supervision feels stretched.

Discussion focus

- What guidelines or requirements relate to supervision and environment? Think about principles, laws, regulations or standards.
- What is expected in everyday practice?
- How do systems support identifying and fixing risks?

Supervision during transitions

At pick-up time, the service becomes busy and noisy. A child briefly wanders toward the gate before being redirected.

Discussion focus

- What guidelines or requirements guide supervision during transitions? (think about principles, laws, regulations or standards)
- What does “reasonable steps” look like in practice?
- What systems or routines reduce risk here?

Supporting children’s participation and voice

A child regularly refuses to join group activities and becomes distressed when encouraged. Staff disagree about whether the child should be pushed to participate.

Discussion focus

- Which principles or standards guide children’s participation?
- How do child rights show up in daily practice?
- What policies or frameworks support inclusive responses?

Listening to children's boundaries

A child tells an educator they don't like being hugged by other children. The educator is unsure how to support this without upsetting others.

Discussion focus

- What guidance supports respecting children's voices? (Think about principles or standards)
- How do standards guide safe, respectful practice?
- What language and systems help here?

Device use and digital safety

A staff member takes photos of children for learning stories but stores them temporarily on a personal phone before uploading them to the service system.

Discussion focus

- What laws, regulations or policies apply?
- How do systems protect children's privacy?
- What support helps staff follow safe practice consistently?

Uncertainty about what applies

A new staff member asks, “What are we actually legally required to do if we’re worried about a child?”

Discussion focus

- Where would you look for guidance?
- Who supports staff to understand requirements?
- How do principles, laws, regulations, standards, and service policies work together?