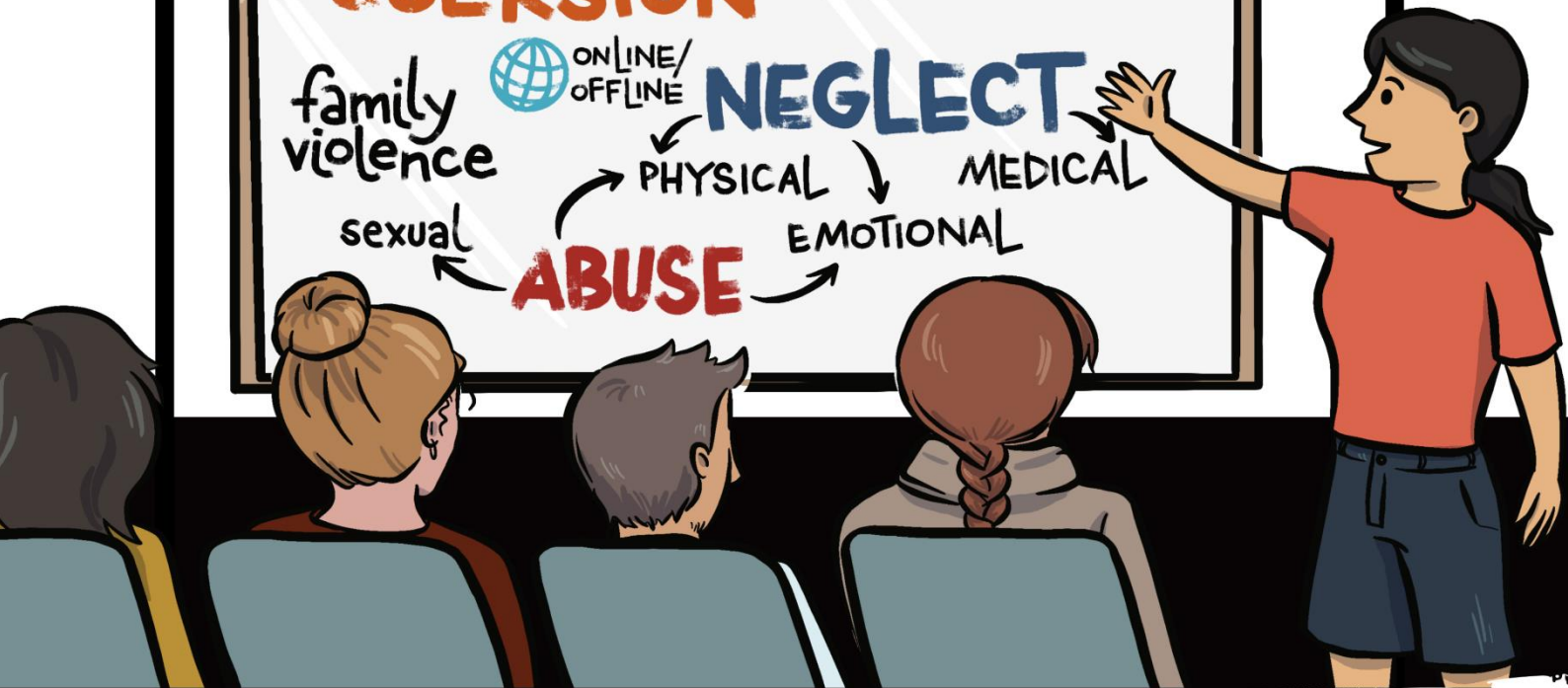
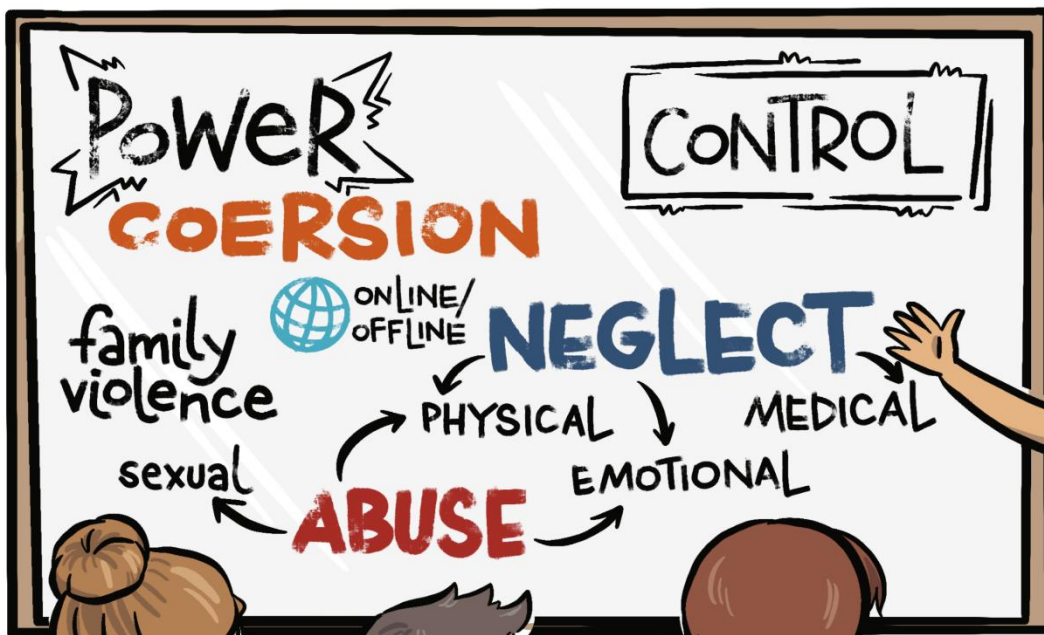


Topic 2

What is child abuse and neglect?



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

What is child abuse and neglect?

Topic 2 introduces a shared understanding of what child abuse and neglect is in the Australian context. It supports participants to build a clear, consistent foundation before moving into more complex topics.

This topic covers:

- The five types of child abuse and neglect, recognised in Australia:
 1. Physical abuse
 2. Neglect
 3. Emotional abuse
 4. Exposure to family and domestic violence
 5. Sexual abuse
- The responsibility of education and care staff and volunteers to:
 - Use appropriate behaviour guidance
 - Not subject any child being educated or cared for by the service to any form of corporal punishment or any discipline that is unreasonable in the circumstances (Section 166 - Education and Care Services National Law)
 - Maintain professional boundaries and child-safe conduct
 - Not subject any child being educated or cared for by the service to conduct that a reasonable person would consider to be inappropriate in an education and care service under Section 166A- Education and Care Services National Law
 - Understand that abuse can occur within organisations, not only in families, particularly where power, authority, isolation, or poor supervision increase risk.




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, questions, or reflective prompts to guide discussion.

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

Activity 1: Noticing concerns	
Objective	<p>This activity supports participants to practise identifying the five types of child abuse and neglect using case examples. It helps participants:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthen understanding of the five types of abuse and neglect • Recognise that children may experience more than one type of abuse at the same time • Recognise that abuse can occur both outside of organisations and within organisations • Identify examples of abuse both outside and within organisations • Identify examples of behaviour that may be considered inappropriate discipline or inappropriate conduct within education and care settings.
Time	40 – 60 minutes
Format	
Materials needed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ‘Six large headings on butcher’s paper displayed clearly and separately: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Physical Abuse ○ Neglect ○ Emotional abuse ○ Family and domestic violence ○ Sexual Abuse ○ Inappropriate discipline / inappropriate conduct • A set of scenario cards • Blu-tack or tape • Optional: an extra poster - “Unsure”



Activity plan

Facilitator preamble

"We're going to do an activity that is practical and a bit hands-on. The goal is to help you explore the different categories of abuse and neglect and recognise examples of behaviours that may fall under these categories."

Remind participants:

- No one needs to share personal experiences.
- It's okay to feel unsure or to disagree respectfully.
- More than one type of abuse or neglect may fit the same example.
- Some scenarios also require us to consider if it may be an example of inappropriate discipline/inappropriate conduct within an education and care service.
- If anyone feels overwhelmed, they can step out or take a break.

Step 1: Set up the room (5 minutes)

- Place the six posters around the room.
- Put the example cards in a pile on a table.
- Briefly explain the five abuse categories.
- Re-enforce that abuse can happen anywhere adults, young people, or other children have power, authority, or influence over children.
- Reinforce that abuse can happen both within education and care settings and outside of these settings.
- Remind participants that there are safeguards and legal protections that specifically address risks that arise inside education and care services, including the offences of inappropriate discipline and inappropriate conduct.

Step 2: Small group sorting (10-15 minutes)

- Divide participants into small groups of 3-4.
- Ask each group to take 6-8 cards.
- Ask groups to read each scenario and decide which category or categories of abuse the scenarios reflect.

- Remind participants that the scenario may relate to multiple types of abuse.
- If unsure, they can use the “unsure” poster.
- Remind participants: “the scenarios are fictional and do not include lots of detail. These scenarios are designed to spark discussion.”

Step 3: “Double tag” round (5 minutes)

- Invite groups to do one quick lap of the room and add a tick to any card where they think more than one type of abuse may be present (for example, family and domestic violence and emotional abuse; physical abuse and emotional abuse).
- Reinforce that overlap is common and that child safety concerns rarely sit neatly in one category.
- Ask participants which scenarios may also involve inappropriate discipline or inappropriate conduct under the National Law.

Step 4: Whole group debrief (15-25 minutes)

- Stand near the posters and guide discussion using prompts:
 - *“Which cards were easiest to place? Why?”*
 - *“Which cards were hardest? What made them unclear?”*
 - *“Where did we see more than one type of abuse?”*

Step 5: Practice link (5-10 minutes)

- Ask participants to choose one card and answer:
 - *“What is it about this scenario that raises concern?”*
 - *“What would you document?”*
 - *“Who would you consult with next in our service process, and why?”*
- Reinforce that documenting objectively, and consulting appropriately are key professional responsibilities, even when certainty is not possible.



Facilitator tips

- If “smacking” comes up, remind the group: what may be legal in some family or caregiving contexts is not permitted in education and care services.
- Use the “Unsure” category to normalise uncertainty and professional judgement.
- If emotions rise, pause and ground the group: *“Let’s take a moment to pause and take a breath. We can stay with practice and role.”*





Online adaptation (MS Teams or Zoom)

This activity can be delivered online using breakout rooms and a shared digital workspace. The aim remains the same: to help participants practise noticing different types of harm using shared language, without needing certainty or “right answers.”

Instead of physical posters and cards, participants work with a shared document, slide, or virtual whiteboard that includes the different types of abuse, neglect, and inappropriate conduct/inappropriate discipline categories and a set of example scenarios.

Preparation before the session

- Prepare a shared digital activity space that includes:
 1. Physical abuse
 2. Neglect
 3. Emotional abuse
 4. Family and domestic violence
 5. Sexual abuse
 6. Inappropriate Conduct/Inappropriate Discipline
 7. Optional: Unsure / Not enough information yet
- Note for Inappropriate Conduct/Inappropriate Discipline – explain that for those scenarios involving an education and care service, we need to consider whether the behaviour may be an example of inappropriate conduct or inappropriate discipline, in addition to abuse or neglect.
- Upload scenario cards directly into the shared slide deck or digital board so groups can copy them.
- Consider using:
 - Shared document (e.g., shared PDF or document link)
 - Whiteboard (e.g., zoom whiteboard)
- Have the links ready before the session begins.

Step 1: Create a safe online space

- Begin with the facilitator preamble and a wellbeing reminder.
- Explain that the activity is about noticing and reflecting, not proving harm or analysing real cases.
- Remind participants that sharing is optional.

- Participants can step away from the computer if needed.
- Encourage cameras on or off, based on comfort.
- Remind participants support pathways are available (e.g., EAP, supervision etc.).

Step 2: Frame the task

- Share your screen and explain how the digital board, slides, or shared document works.
- Clarify that:
 - Scenarios may fit more than one category of abuse or neglect.
 - Scenarios may also fit the category of inappropriate conduct/inappropriate discipline.
 - It is acceptable to choose “Unsure/Not enough information yet.”
 - The goal is discussion and reasoning, not certainty.

Step 3: Breakout room sorting

- Place participants into breakout rooms of 3-5 people.
- Assign each group a small set of scenarios (6-8 per group).
- Direct groups to:
 - Read each scenario together.
 - Drag or place each scenario under:
 - One abuse or neglect category
 - More than one abuse or neglect category
 - Or “Unsure / Not enough information yet”
- Encourage groups to:
 - Talk through their reasoning.
 - Notice overlaps between different types of abuse and neglect.
 - Accept different views without needing agreement.
 - Use the chat function or comments within the shared board if helpful.

Step 4: Overlap and reflection

- Ask groups to mark or note any scenarios where more than one type of abuse or harm could apply.
- Ask groups to reflect on:
 - “What is it about this scenario that raises concern?”
 - “What types of abuse or neglect might the child be experiencing?”

- “Is this an example of inappropriate discipline or inappropriate conduct?”
- “If unsure, explain the reasons why.”

Step 5: Whole group debrief

- Bring participants back to the main room and screen share the completed digital board.
- Facilitate a discussion using prompts such as:
 - *Which examples were easiest or hardest to place, and why?*
 - *Where did we notice overlap between different types of abuse or harm?*
 - *Which examples felt unclear or like more information was needed?*

Step 6: Practice Link

- Invite participants to choose one scenario and respond in the chat or verbally:
 - *What about this scenario caused concern?*
 - *What would you document?*
 - *Who would you consult with next in your service process?*

Step 7: Closing reflection

Many situations involving children are not always clear-cut. As you’ve seen, a single situation can involve more than one category of abuse or neglect, and sometimes the same behaviour may also raise concerns about inappropriate conduct or inappropriate discipline. Being able to recognise these overlaps is an important part of protecting children.



Scenario cards: Noticing concerns

These scenario cards are designed to help participants practise identifying behaviours (both acts or failures to act) that may fall under the different categories of abuse and neglect as well as inappropriate discipline and inappropriate conduct. Participants are encouraged to think about what questions arise for them, and how concerns might be described in clear, objective ways.

To support manageable discussion:

- Participants do **not** use all cards at once.
- Small groups should work with a subset only (usually 6-8 cards per group).
- Groups may place cards under one or more categories.
- An “Unsure / Not enough information yet” option is encouraged and is a valid response.
- Remind participants that for those scenarios involving education and care staff to also consider if it is an example of inappropriate discipline/inappropriate conduct.

Facilitators are encouraged to adapt these cards and develop their own examples that reflect their service, community, or local context. Where appropriate, de-identified examples from professional experience may also be used. All examples must remain de-identified and focus on situations and practice, rather than individuals, services, or outcomes.

Scenario 1

An educator at a long day care centre grabs a four-year-old child forcefully by the arm and drags him to the calm down corner. She shouts, “You never listen! You’re naughty and now you’ve ruined it for everyone. You can sit here and face the wall until you learn how to behave.” The child cries quietly alone on the mat.

Scenario 2

A family day care educator is caring for three four-year-old children in her home. She leaves the children outside to play unsupervised for two hours while she takes a personal call, answers emails and performs household tasks. During this time, she does not go outside, visually check on the children, or interact with them. No food or snacks are offered during this period, despite it being a very hot day and the children receive no supervision, engagement or support.

Scenario 3

An educator witnesses a colleague rough handling a child who was resisting going for their afternoon nap. The educator witnessed her colleague becoming frustrated with the child, raising her voice, forcefully smacking the child on the bottom and throwing them on the mattress.

Scenario 4

During quiet reading time, a four-year-old child tells her family day care educator that her mum went out last night with her boyfriend and left her alone at home. The child explains that she woke up in the middle of the night after having a nightmare and she couldn't find her mum in the house, it was dark, and she felt really scared. The educator is aware that the child's mother has separated from the child's father and currently resides alone with the child. The educator asks the child if any other adults were in the house with her and she says, "No I was alone."

Scenario 5

At an outside school hours care service, a seven-year-old child tells a staff member that they are feeling scared to go home because their dad's friends always come over on Tuesdays and make her do things that she does not want to do. She explains that she has told her dad this, but he goes out and leaves her with his friends anyway.

Scenario 6

A two-year-old child attends a long day care centre. During pick up, a volunteer overhears a parent saying to the child, "If you carry on complaining, I'll give you a belting when we get home." The parent is heard calling the child a swear word and forcefully restraining the child in their car seat. The child is heard crying during this incident.

Scenario 7

At outside of school hours care, an eight-year-old child tells a staff member that she hopes her mum and dad get a divorce soon because she hates living at home with them. She explains that her parents are always "screaming at each other," "smashing things" when they get angry and "sometimes hit and push each other." The child explains that her mum has recently tried to get her and her younger brothers to "say mean things" to her dad which makes her feel guilty.

Scenario 8

A family day care educator notices unusual marks, welts and what appears to be bruises on the back of a two-year-old child's thighs and buttocks during nappy change. When asked about these injuries the parent says, "When the kids misbehave, they get a spanking, that's the way in our house."

Scenario 9

A child frequently becomes distressed during nappy changes and when staff try to assist them with changing their clothes. The child frequently complains about having "ouchies" whilst holding their private parts and appears to be in physical pain and discomfort. When this is discussed with the child's mother, she dismisses the concerns and says, "Oh I'm sure it's nothing." When the mother is encouraged to take the child to the doctor for medical advice she refuses saying, "You're all over reacting."

Scenario 10

A child arrives at preschool each week wearing dirty and smelly clothes and appears very hungry. The child eats quickly and becomes upset when food is packed away. On occasion the child has been seen hoarding food and putting food in his backpack. When asked about this, the child says he wants to take it home for later, so he doesn't get hungry.

Scenario 11

A child becomes upset when their parent leaves briefly. The parent tells the child, "Stop crying, you're embarrassing me," and walks away. The child remains distressed for a long time.

Scenario 12

A child becomes distressed during loud play and tells a staff member, "Stop! I don't like shouting. Dad shouts at mum and it's scary." The child goes on to say, "I hate it when dad shouts because I know he's going to hit me or mum." The child then quickly changes the subject.

Scenario 13

An educator at a long day care centre gives one child special privileges, extra snacks, and time alone. The child is told often, "These are your treats because I can trust you won't tell anyone else about them."

Scenario 14

A child flinches when adults at the service raise their voices, even when the noise is not directed at them. The child frequently apologises and asks if they are "in trouble."

Scenario 15

An educator grabs a child firmly by the arm, deliberately pinches him on the inside of the arm causing pain and a red mark, and forcefully pulls him away from a group, saying, "I've had enough of you today."

Scenario 16

A five-year-old child who attends outside school hours care is seen pushing over another child. When asked about what happened, the child says, "She annoyed me." The staff member explains that it is not safe to hit another person if you are feeling annoyed. The child replies by saying, "But my granddad hits my mum all the time when my mum's being annoying. He says he can hit me too if I'm annoying."



Facilitator reference guide: Noticing concerns

The guidance below is provided to support facilitator preparation and confidence when leading this activity. It is not intended to be shared with participants in advance, nor does it represent a single or “correct” set of answers.


The purpose of this reference guide is to help facilitators anticipate possible themes, strengthen their own understanding of the content, and feel prepared to guide discussion in a calm, reflective, and strengths-based way. Participants will bring diverse perspectives, professional experiences, and insights to the conversation. These contributions are valuable and should be welcomed, explored, and linked back to key principles of child safety and professional practice.

For each scenario, ask participants to reflect on:

1. “What is it about this scenario that raises concern?”
2. “What types of abuse or neglect might the child be experiencing?”
3. “Is this an example of inappropriate discipline or inappropriate conduct?”
4. “If unsure, explain the reasons why.”
5. “What information, if any, might you feel is missing?”
6. “What information, if any, might you need?”
7. “Is there anything that feels unclear in this scenario”?
8. “What would you document?”
9. “What would you need to report?”
10. “Who would you consult with next in the service, and why?”

Summary of Scenario	Primary Concerns
1. Educator shouts and grabs child forcefully by the arm.	Physical abuse; Emotional abuse; Inappropriate discipline; Inappropriate conduct
2. Education leaves children unsupervised.	Neglect; Inappropriate conduct
3. Educator witnesses a colleague rough handling a child, raising their voice, and smacking them.	Physical abuse; Inappropriate discipline
4. Child tells educator that she was left alone at home while her mum went out with her boyfriend.	Neglect
5. Child tells staff member they are scared to go home because her dad's friends make her do things she does not want.	Sexual abuse; Neglect
6. Volunteer overhears parent threatening their child, using forceful restraint, and swearing.	Emotional abuse; Physical abuse
7. Educator notes unusual marks, welts, and bruises on a child's body.	Physical abuse; Unsure
8. Child tells staff member about dynamics at home and her parents fighting.	Family and domestic violence; Emotional abuse
9. Child becomes distressed during nappy changes and appears to be in physical pain and discomfort.	Sexual abuse; Neglect

<p>10. Child presents to day care wearing clothes that are dirty and smell and appears very hungry and is seen hoarding food.</p>	<p>Neglect</p>
<p>11. Parents response to their child becoming upset and distressed when they leave.</p>	<p>Emotional abuse; Unsure</p>
<p>12. Child becomes distressed during loud play, and shares conflict between parents within the home.</p>	<p>Physical abuse; Family and domestic violence</p>
<p>13. Educator gives a child special privileges, snacks, and alone time.</p>	<p>Inappropriate conduct</p>
<p>14. Child flinches when adults raise their voice and frequently apologies.</p>	<p>Physical abuse; Emotional abuse; Unsure</p>
<p>15. Educator grabs a child firmly, pinches them and uses force.</p>	<p>Physical abuse; Inappropriate discipline</p>
<p>16. Child shares conflict at home, noting that granddad hits their mum and threatens to hit them too.</p>	<p>Family and domestic violence; Emotional abuse; Physical abuse</p>

Activity 2: Guidance or harm	
Objective	<p>This activity helps participants clarify the difference between:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Positive behaviour guidance (supporting children to learn and regulate). • Inappropriate discipline (any form of corporal punishment or any discipline that is unreasonable in the circumstances). • Inappropriate conduct (conduct that a reasonable person would consider to be inappropriate in an education and care service). <p>It supports reflective practice by helping participants notice how actions can be unsafe practice.</p>
Time	35 - 50 minutes
Format	 <p>Whole Group Activity</p>
Materials needed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Three signs stuck on a wall (at least 2 meters apart): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Positive behaviour guidance ○ Inappropriate Discipline ○ Inappropriate Conduct • A set of “structured moments” cards • Whiteboard / butcher’s paper • Whiteboard / marker pens • Optional: a copy of your service’s behaviour guidance statement or policy summary (if available)



Activity plan

Facilitator preamble

"This activity is designed to help us explore the difference between positive behaviour guidance and inappropriate discipline or inappropriate conduct within education and care services."

Remind participants:

- Keep examples de-identified (no names, no services).
- Focus on actions, impact, and safer alternatives.
- Step out if needed.

Step 1: Set the tone (3 minutes)

- Briefly explain each of the three categories in simple language.
- Explain that participants will physically move to the sign that best matches their view.
- Explain that people can stand in different places and that disagreement is okay.

Step 2: Move and reflect (10-15 minutes)

- Read one card aloud.
- After reading each card, ask participants to move to the sign/area that best represents their view.
- Once participants are in position:
 - Invite 1-2 people from different spots to share *why* (briefly)
- Repeat with several cards.

Step 3: Introduce the "child lens" (10 minutes)

- After 3-4 cards, deepen the reflection by adding:
 - *"If you were the child, how might this feel?"*
 - *"What might the child learn about adults, safety, or belonging?"*
- Encourage participants to think about:

- Emotional safety.
- Trust.
- Regulation.
- Power.
- Record key words on the white board or butcher's paper.

Step 4: Repair and reframe (10-15 minutes)

- Choose 2-3 scenario cards that were placed in:
 - Inappropriate discipline.
- Divide participants into small groups.
- Ask groups to rewrite the response, making sure it is an example of positive behaviour guidance.
- Prompt them to consider:
 - *"What could an educator or staff member say instead?"*
 - *"What could we do differently with the environment, routine, or staffing?"*
 - *"What support might the educator or staff member need in that moment?"*

Step 5: Whole-group close (2-5 minutes)

- Ask: *"What helps us stay regulated, calm, and child-safe when managing challenging behaviour or implementing positive behaviour guidance strategies?"*



Facilitator tips

- If the group minimises harm, bring it back to: *"In education and care services, the expectation is guidance, not fear, force or negative consequences."*
- If someone shares a serious incident, respond calmly and redirect to process: *"Thank you. Let's pause. We won't unpack details here. If there's an immediate concern, we'll follow service procedure after the session."*



Online adaptation (MS Teams or Zoom)

This activity can be delivered online using breakout rooms, polling tools, or simple shared prompts in chat. The purpose remains the same: to help participants reflect on the line between positive behaviour guidance and unsafe or inappropriate discipline, using everyday early childhood and care examples.

Platform Preparation (before the session)

- Prepare one slide clearly displaying the four categories and their simple definitions: Supportive Guidance, Concerning/Unclear, Inappropriate Discipline, and Inappropriate Conduct. Keep this slide visible throughout the activity.
- Prepare each scenario on a separate slide so they can be shared one at a time.
- Prepare a slide with the “child lens” reflection questions ready to display midway through the activity.
- Prepare a shared document or collaborative slide with space for small groups to rewrite 2–3 selected scenarios during the repair activity.
- Set up breakout rooms in advance (3-4 participants per group).
- Prepare a visible slide listing support pathway (e.g., supervision, EAP, leadership contacts) to display at the beginning and end of the session.
- Decide in advance how you will capture key insights (e.g., typing directly onto a shared slide during whole-group discussion).
- Have the links ready before the session begins.

Step 1: Create psychological safety

- Begin with the facilitator preamble and a wellbeing reminder.
- Encourage cameras on or off, based on comfort.
- Participants can step away from the computer if needed.
- Remind participants support pathways are available (e.g., EAP, supervision etc.).
- Then clearly explain the four categories:
 - Positive Behaviour Guidance
 - Inappropriate Discipline
 - Inappropriate Conduct
- Display these categories on a shared screen throughout the activity.

Step 2: Presenting the scenarios

- Share one scenario at a time by:
 - Reading it aloud, and/or
 - Posting it in the chat or on a shared slide
- Ask participants to respond in one of the following ways:
 - Voting in a poll, or
 - Typing
 - PBG (Positive Behaviour Guidance)
 - ID (Inappropriate Discipline)
 - IC (Inappropriate Conduct)
 - Using reaction emojis if pre-assigned
- After each scenario, invite 1-2 participants to briefly share why they chose that category; or
- Display the poll results (if used)
- Normalise difference: *“Different answers are expected. The learning is in the discussion.”*

Step 3: Add the “child lens”

- After several scenarios, pause and introduce the child-focused reflection.
- Display these questions on the screen:
 - *“If you were the child in this moment, how might this feel?”*
 - *“What might this child learn about adults, safety, or belonging?”*
- Encourage responses via:
 - Chat waterfall (everyone types and presses enter together)
 - Verbal sharing
 - Or a short breakout room discussion (3-5 minutes)
- Keep the focus on impact, not intent.

Step 4: Repair and rewrite

- Place participants into breakout rooms (2-4 people)
- Share 2-3 concerning scenarios in a shared document, slide, or chat.
- Ask groups to rewrite the response into:
 - Calm, respectful positive behaviour guidance
 - Clear limits without fear or shame
- Prompt groups to consider:
 - *What could an educator or staff member say instead?*
 - *“What could we do differently with the environment, routine, or staffing?”*

- *“What support might the educator or staff member need in that moment?”*
- Groups can record their rewritten responses in a shared document or be ready to share verbally.

Step 5: Whole-group discussion

- Bring everyone back together.
- Invite groups to share one rewritten response or key insight.
- Capture key phrases, strategies, or reminders verbally or in chat.

Step 6: Closing reflection

- Close with reflective prompts such as:
 - *“What helps us stay regulated, calm and child-safe when managing challenging behaviour or implementing positive behaviour guidance strategies?”*





Scenario cards: Guidance or harm?

The scenarios included in this activity are designed to support focused discussion about everyday practice and child safety. They are intentionally brief and do not provide full context.

Facilitators **do not** need to use all scenarios in one session. You may choose to:

- Select a small number of scenarios that best suit your group, time available, or service context.
- Skip scenarios that feel repetitive or less relevant.
- Adapt existing scenarios so they better reflect your setting or community
- Create your own scenarios based on real (de-identified) situations from your service.

The examples provided are starting points only. Facilitators are encouraged to use professional judgement and tailor the activity to what will be most meaningful and safe for participants.

Before reading out the cards, say to participants:

“Some of these examples are deliberately vague to prompt discussion. They are included to help you explore behaviours and consider as a group whether they are examples of positive behaviour guidance or inappropriate discipline or inappropriate conduct. They are designed to spark discussion about what additional information or context may be needed to help you decide.”

Scenarios

1. An educator says loudly, “I’m sick of waiting. If you don’t line up properly, no one is going outside.”
2. A child refuses lunch. The educator calmly says, “You don’t have to eat, but the food will stay here if you get hungry later.”
3. A staff member says, “If you don’t finish your homework now, you can’t play with the others.”

4. A child throws blocks during pack-up. The educator moves closer and says calmly, "It's not safe to throw blocks because someone could get hurt. I can see you're upset. Let's pack up together."
5. An educator gently places a hand between two children and says, "It's not safe to hit. I'm here to help you calm down."
6. A staff member insists on unnecessary physical contact during games and tells a child, "This is our special thing."
7. A child is told by an educator, "You can sit out and watch because you didn't follow the rules," while the game continues.
8. An educator tells a child to wait to use the toilet because, "You should have gone earlier."
9. An adult says quietly, "I can see you're excited. Let's keep the paint on the table," and helps the child clean up together.
10. An educator rolls their eyes and says, "Honestly, you're so dramatic," when a child is upset.
11. A staff member withholds an afternoon snack because a child was "too rude earlier."
12. A child falls and cries. An educator says, "You're okay, don't be silly," and walks away.
13. An educator kneels and says, "It's not safe to throw toys. We can choose something else to do together."
14. A caregiver leans close to a child and says quietly, "If you tell anyone what happens here, you'll be sorry."
15. A staff member calls across the room, "Why do you always do this?" when a child breaks a rule.
16. A child is made to sit away from the group for the entire mat session consequently for not listening earlier.
17. A staff member locks a child in a storage room "to calm down" and tells other children not to talk about it.
18. An adult forces a toy out of a child's hands and says, "We share here, whether you like it or not."

19. A child cries when their parent leaves. The educator sits nearby and says, "It's hard to say goodbye. I'm here with you, and we can look at your favourite book together."
20. A staff member says, "Well done, genius," when a child spills their drink.
21. An educator physically restrains a child in a highchair for an extended time so the room stays "calm."
22. An educator drags a child by the arm across the room and says, "I don't care if it hurts. You brought this on yourself."
23. A child is repeatedly told to "go sit over there" whenever they interrupt adults talking.
24. A child becomes overwhelmed after school. A staff member says, "You've had a big day. Would you like to sit with me for a few minutes or have some quiet space outside?"
25. A staff member offers, "Would you like to sit with me for a minute or get some fresh air?" to a dysregulated child.
26. An educator says, "If you don't behave, I'll call your mum and tell her how bad you've been."
27. A child who has wet themselves is told they must sit in their soiled clothes "to learn a lesson."
28. Two children argue over a toy. The adult kneels and says, "I can see you both want the same thing. Let's work out a way to take turns so everyone feels okay."
29. "A staff member plays music from their personal phone during pack-up time. The lyrics include sexual references and aggressive language. Some children repeat words they hear, and the staff member says, "I didn't even notice – it's just a song."



Extension: How this activity links to the National Quality Standard

This section is included as an **optional** extension to support facilitators who wish to intentionally link discussion back to the National Quality Standard. If you feel confident, you may choose to link the National Quality Standard naturally into discussion as they arise.

If time is limited, or if the group is already deeply engaged in reflection, it is fine to acknowledge the link briefly. Use your judgement based on the needs, experience, and energy of the group.

This section is intended to increase intentionality by helping educators see how everyday interactions and decisions directly connect to quality, safeguarding, and planning requirements under the National Quality Standard.

Facilitator Preamble

“Before we move on, I want to briefly connect what we’ve just been doing to the National Quality Standard.”

This isn’t extra work or another set of rules. The everyday moments we’ve talked about, how we speak to children, how we set limits, how we respond when things are hard, are exactly what the National Quality Standard and related quality areas are about. When we reflect on these moments together, we’re strengthening both child safety and quality practice.”

National Quality Standard

Quality Area 2: Children's Health and Safety

. Children have the right to experience quality education and care in an environment that safeguards and promotes their health, safety and wellbeing.

How the activity links:

When educators:

- Respond calmly instead of using fear or punishment.
- Make sure children have access to food, water, toileting, and rest.
- Notice distress and respond supportively.

They are actively protecting children's health, wellbeing, and safety. Positive behaviour guidance reduces harm and helps children feel secure.

Optional reflective prompt for the group:

- *Which examples today felt most clearly linked to children's emotional safety?*

Quality Area 4: Staffing Arrangements

. Qualified and experienced educators, who develop warm, respectful relationships with children, create predictable environments and encourage children's active engagement in the learning program.

How the activity links:

When staff:

- Manage their own stress and emotions
- Ask for help instead of escalating behaviour
- Repair interactions when things go wrong

They are showing professional practice and shared responsibility. Safe practice is not about perfection. It is about awareness, teamwork, and accountability.

Optional reflective prompt:

- *What helps staff stay regulated and supported during high-pressure moments?*

Quality Area 5: Relationships with Children

. Relationships with children are responsive, respectful and promote children's sense of security and belonging.

How the activity links:

Positive examples show:

- Clear limits without shame
- Warm, respectful language
- Adults getting down to a child's level

Adults taking responsibility when they make mistakes. These interactions build trust and help children feel safe to express emotions and needs.

Optional reflective prompt:

- *What language or responses from today's activity felt most respectful from a child's point of view?*

Quality Area 7: Governance and Leadership

Effective leadership and governance of the service contributes to quality environments for children's learning and development. Effective leaders establish shared values for the service and set clear direction for the service's continuous improvement.

How the activity links:

When services:

- Talk openly about what good practice looks like
- Support staff to reflect rather than blame
- Encourage speaking up about concerns

They are building a child-safe culture, not just following rules.

Optional reflective prompt:

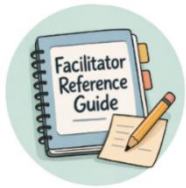
- *What helps people feel safe to raise concerns or ask for guidance in our service?*



Facilitator tip

- You do not need to “teach” the National Quality Standard in this section.
- Simply naming the connection helps participants link reflection to programming, planning, and everyday decision-making.
- Even a brief reference reinforces that child safety and quality practice are deeply connected.





Facilitator reference guide: Scenario guidance


Use this table to support discussion, not to “mark” answers as right or wrong.

#	Structured Moment	Possible Discussion Points	Notes/ prompts for discussion
1	“If you don’t line up properly, no one is going outside.”	Inappropriate Discipline / Unclear (may need more context/ is it a safety concern for example)	Is this using threats/collective punishment to control behaviour? Is it an example of positive behaviour guidance? Is there additional info we need to know?
2	Educator calmly says food will stay available later.	Positive Behaviour Guidance	Respects autonomy and meets basic needs without pressure.
3	“If you don’t finish homework, you can’t play.”	Inappropriate Discipline	Withholding play as punishment? Is this developmentally appropriate/ supportive?
4	“It’s not safe to throw blocks... let’s pack up together.”	Positive Behaviour Guidance	Clear boundary, calm tone, support and co-regulation.

5	"It's not safe to hit. I'm here to help you calm down."	Positive Behaviour Guidance	Protective intervention with emotional support.
6	"This is our special thing" with unnecessary touch.	Inappropriate Conduct	Boundary crossing, secrecy and favouritism are red flags.
7	Child made to sit out while game continues.	Inappropriate Discipline	Exclusion and shame rather than guidance or repair.
8	Told to wait to use toilet.	Inappropriate Discipline/ Unclear / May need more context for example is it during transportation and therefore the child must wait until they reach the service/ are all the toilets in use so child must wait briefly.	Withholding toileting breaches dignity and basic care responsibilities. Is there any additional information we need to know? Is the child being told to wait to use the toilet as a form of punishment or for other reasons?
9	Calm redirection and help cleaning paint.	Positive Behaviour Guidance	Respectful tone; teaches skills without shame.
10	"You're so dramatic."	Inappropriate Discipline	Emotional shaming; dismisses feelings.
11	Snack withheld due to behaviour.	Inappropriate Discipline	Food should never be used as punishment.

12	"You're okay, don't be silly," and walks away.	Inappropriate conduct	Minimises distress; missed opportunity for support.
13	"It's not safe to throw toys... choose something else."	Positive Behaviour Guidance	Boundary with choice and connection.
14	"If you tell anyone, you'll be sorry."	Inappropriate Conduct	Threats, secrecy and intimidation.
15	"Why do you always do this?" called across room.	Inappropriate Discipline	Public shaming and negative labelling.
16	Sitting out for entire mat session.	Inappropriate Discipline	Prolonged exclusion; punitive and not proportionate.
17	Child locked in storage room.	Inappropriate Conduct	Serious breach; isolation, confinement and secrecy.
18	Forcing toy out of child's hands.	Inappropriate Discipline	Physical force without explanation or support.
19	Sitting nearby, acknowledging feelings, offering book.	Positive Behaviour Guidance	Trauma-aware, relational support.
20	"Well done, genius," sarcastically.	Inappropriate Discipline/ Inappropriate Conduct	Humiliation masked as humour.
21	Child restrained in highchair for convenience.	Inappropriate Conduct/ inappropriate discipline	Physical restraint for behaviour management; high-risk practice.

22	Dragging child and saying “you brought this on yourself”.	Inappropriate Conduct/ inappropriate discipline	Physical and emotional abuse; very serious.
23	Repeatedly told to “go sit over there”.	Inappropriate Discipline	Exclusion used as default response.
24	Offering choice after a big day.	Positive Behaviour Guidance	Co-regulation and respect for child’s needs.
25	Offering sit-with-me or fresh air.	Positive Behaviour Guidance	Calm, supportive options without pressure.
26	“I’ll call your mum and tell her how bad you’ve been.”	Inappropriate Discipline	Threats and shame; misuse of power.
27	Child left in soiled clothes “to learn a lesson”.	Inappropriate Conduct/ inappropriate discipline	Neglectful, humiliating, unsafe and abusive.
28	Helping children negotiate turn-taking.	Positive Behaviour Guidance	Skill-building and respectful conflict resolution.
29	Staff member plays music from personal phone (with explicit language and references).	Inappropriate Conduct	Exposure to inappropriate material, limited awareness, and emotional harm.

Activity 3: Exploring the different types of neglect	
Objective	<p>To strengthen participants' understanding of the different forms of neglect, increase confidence in recognising indicators, and support reflective, child-centred responses within education and care settings.</p> <p>By the end of this session, participants will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distinguish between different types of neglect. • Recognise early indicators in everyday practice. • Reflect on assumptions and bias and further contextual information that may be required.
Time	30-45 minutes
Format	
Materials needed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scenario cards or a selection of adapted scenarios targeted to your service setting. • Whiteboard • Marker • Pens • Paper



Activity plan

Facilitator preamble

“Neglect is the failure to meet a child’s basic needs. Neglect may not always be obvious and often presents subtly over time. There are different types of neglect including physical, emotional, educational, environmental, medical and lack of supervision. This activity will help you to explore and identify the different types of neglect and recognise how these different types of neglect can often overlap.”

Remind participants

- Keep discussions general.
- Do not identify or discuss individual children or families.
- Take breaks as needed.
- The scenarios provided in this activity have been written to be deliberately vague to prompt discussion and consideration of what additional contextual information may be required.

Step 1: Identify the different types of neglect

Write on the whiteboard different headings to represent the different types of neglect

- Physical neglect
- Emotional neglect
- Educational neglect
- Environmental neglect
- Medical neglect
- Lack of supervision

Step 2: Small-group discussion

Divide participants into small groups. Provide each group with 2–3 short case scenarios from the scenario examples below or create your own scenarios. Ask groups to:

- Discuss the scenario and consider if it may be an example of neglect.
- Consider what additional information may be needed, or what other factors may influence your interpretation of the situation.

- Identify the primary type of neglect or discuss whether more than one type of neglect may be present.

Step 3: Whole group discussion

- As a whole group discussion, pose the following questions and encourage participants to share their thoughts and ideas with the group or reflect quietly with pen and paper. If discussion is slow, consider splitting the group back into smaller groups.
 - *Which types of neglect were easiest to identify? Why?*
 - *Which types of neglect felt more complex or uncertain? What additional contextual information was required?*
 - *Did any of the scenarios challenge your assumptions about what neglect “looks like”?*
 - *How do cultural, social or economic factors influence our interpretation?*
 - *How do we avoid assumptions while still acting protectively?*



Facilitator tip

Encourage groups to keep discussion practice-focused and de-identified.





Online adaptation (MS Teams or Zoom)

This activity can be delivered online using shared slides or a short handout with key data points, along with chat responses and breakout rooms. The purpose remains the same: to strengthen participants' understanding of the different forms of neglect, increase confidence in recognising indicators, and support reflective and child-centred responses within education and care settings.

Platform preparation (before the session)

- Prepare a slide with the different headings to represent the different types of neglect:
 - Physical neglect
 - Emotional neglect
 - Educational neglect
 - Environmental neglect
 - Medical neglect
 - Lack of supervision
- Prepare each short case scenario from the scenario examples on separate slides. You can also create your own scenarios on separate slides.
- Optional: Prepare separate slides with reflective prompts for small-group discussion and whole-group discussion to guide and elicit conversation
- Set up breakout rooms in advance (3-4 participants per group).
- Have the links ready before the session begins.

Step 1: Create psychological safety

- Begin with the facilitator preamble
- Provide a wellbeing reminder
- Remind participants they can step away from the computer if needed
- Encourage cameras on or off, based on comfort
- Remind participants support pathways are available (e.g., EAP, supervision etc.)

Step 2: Set the context

- Briefly explain to participants:
 - The different types of neglect, including physical neglect, emotional neglect, educational neglect, environmental neglect, medical neglect, and lack of supervision
- Share the different types of neglect using:
 - Slide
 - Screen share
- Suggested facilitator preamble:

“Neglect is the failure to meet a child’s basic needs. Neglect may not always be obvious and often presents subtly over time. There are different types of neglect including physical, emotional, educational, environmental, medical and lack of supervision. This activity will help you to explore and identify the different types of neglect and recognise how these different types of neglect can often overlap.”

Step 3: Small-group discussion

- Place participants into breakout rooms (3-4 people)
- Provide each group with 2-3 short case scenarios from examples.
- Share reflection prompts in the chat, such as:
 - *Discuss the scenario and consider if it may be an example of neglect.*
 - *Consider what additional information may be needed, or what other factors may influence your interpretation of the situation.*
 - *Identify the primary type of neglect or discuss whether more than one type of neglect may be present.*

Step 4: Whole-group discussion

- Bring participants back to the main room
- Invite participants to share and discuss:
 - *Which types of neglect were easiest to identify? Why?*
 - *Which types of neglect felt more complex or uncertain? What additional contextual information was required?*
 - *Did any of the scenarios challenge your assumptions about what neglect “looks like”?*
 - *How do cultural, social or economic factors influence our interpretation?*
 - *How do we avoid assumptions while still acting protectively?*
- As facilitator, reflect and consolidate discussion themes.

Step 5: Closing reflection

- Close with short reflective questions, inviting responses via chat or verbally:
 - *What is an insight you are taking away about the different types of neglect?*
 - *If you had to explain key learnings from this activity to a colleague, what would you emphasise?*





Scenario cards: Exploring the different types of neglect

The scenarios included in this activity are designed to support focused discussion about everyday practice and child safety. They are intentionally brief and do not provide full context.

Facilitators **do not** need to use all scenarios in one session. You may choose to:

- Select a small number of scenarios that best suit your group, time available, or service context.
- Skip scenarios that feel repetitive or less relevant.
- Adapt existing scenarios so they better reflect your setting or community
- Create your own scenarios based on real (de-identified) situations from your service.

The examples provided are starting points only. Facilitators are encouraged to use professional judgement and tailor the activity to what will be most meaningful and safe for participants.

Scenario 1

A 4-year-old regularly arrives to outside school hours care without a water bottle or snacks. When offered food, they eat quickly and ask for seconds. Their clothing is often dirty and ill-fitting.

Scenario 2

A 6-year-old rarely speaks and avoids eye contact. They do not seek comfort when distressed and appear unsure how to respond to praise.

Scenario 3

A child with diagnosed asthma frequently attends without medication. The service has reminded the family multiple times.

Scenario 4

A 7-year-old reports to their outside school hours care educator that they often miss school because their mum is depressed and struggles to wake up in the morning.

Scenario 5

A 5-year-old reports to their outside school hours care educator they are often left home alone after school while older siblings are out.

Scenario 6

A child attends a long day care service with frequent outbreaks of headlice.

Scenario 7:

A child's parents continuously fail to attend parent information evenings and events. They have often been late on occasion picking their child up.

Scenario 8

A child attends a family day care without having eaten breakfast and is not wearing a jacket or jumper even though it is a cold day.