



INTERNATIONAL
STEP by STEP
ASSOCIATION

Child Safeguarding Policy

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1. Introduction

With the present Child Safeguarding Policy¹, ISSA addresses the crucial importance of safeguarding children from any kind of abuse or disrespect of a child's rights stemming from the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Although ISSA does not work directly with children, we have developed this Child Safeguarding Policy (CSP) in order to protect children from any abuse, in case of any potential involvement of children in an event hosted by ISSA or a project led by ISSA.

1.1 Vision

ISSA's Vision: A society where families, communities and professionals work together to empower each child to reach their unique potential and embrace values of social justice and equity.

ISSA's Mission: We are an international learning community powered by the leading early childhood experts in Europe and Central Asia. We unite and support professionals and partners to deliver high-quality early years services equitably. We challenge existing knowledge and practice and co-construct new approaches and models.

Strategic Goals:

- Goal 1: Elevate awareness of the importance of Early Childhood Development.
- Goal 2: Promote a high quality and diverse workforce in services for children from birth to 10 years of age.
- Goal 3: Strengthen early childhood systems to provide quality, equitable and integrated services for *all* young children and their families.
- Goal 4: Leverage the strengths of our growing network to contribute to the early childhood field with innovative approaches, noteworthy practice and inter-country learning.

1. Acknowledgment: the information concerning child protection and safeguarding policies draws on inspiration from the following organizations' policies and related documents: Eurochild, OAK Foundation, UNICEF and other organizations focusing on child development and education.

1.2 Commitment

The present Child Safeguarding Policy reflects ISSA's statement of intent that demonstrates a commitment to safeguarding children from harm and makes clear to all what is required in relation to the protection of children. The Child Safeguarding Policy helps to create a safe and positive environment for children and to show that ISSA, as an international association, is taking its duty and responsibility of care seriously.

ISSA follows the European Commission's guiding principles² as a reflection of its profound commitment to safeguarding children from all forms of harm. By having zero tolerance for child abuse, following non-discriminatory practices and by respecting confidentiality, safety and the best interest of the child, ISSA ensures that:

- All children have equal rights to protection from harm.
- Everybody has a responsibility to support the protection of children.
- Our association has a duty of care to children engaged in our initiatives or programs.

Therefore, ISSA developed this policy to:

Safeguard children: by minimizing the risk of intentional or unintentional harm, abuse and exploitation of children within ISSA's events or any ISSA-led initiatives that may involve children and adequately responding if harm and/or abuse occur.

Safeguard staff: by avoiding ambiguous workplace situations and behaviors, which may be misinterpreted and potentially lead to false allegations against ISSA staff.

Safeguard ISSA: by showing its genuine commitment to safeguarding children and preventing cases of abuse from happening, ISSA protects its reputation. It maintains children's rights and well-being at the core of its work.

1.3 Safeguarding Standards

PEOPLE AND SCOPE

The ISSA's Child Safeguarding Policy applies to:

- All staff; Board Members; consultants, and volunteers
- All those acting on behalf of ISSA (members, consultants or trainers) in a project led by ISSA

2. https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/10_principles_for_integrated_child_protection_systems_en.pdf

- All those adults accompanying children to events and activities organized by ISSA
- All those who participate in ISSA events and meetings involving children, including journalists, sponsors, donors, policymakers, etc.

All individuals directly affiliated with ISSA (staff, Board Members, consultants, trainers, volunteers) will be expected to read ISSA's Child Safeguarding Policy and sign a letter of commitment to adhere to its principles and procedures.

PROCEDURES FOR REPORTING

All the individuals to whom this Policy applies (those listed above) should be alert to signs that may indicate that a child is in need of help.

ACT WHEN A CHILD- PROTECTION CONCERN DRAWS YOUR ATTENTION:

Act on your concerns.
If in doubt, speak out.

Child-centered. The protection
of children is the most crucial
consideration.

Time counts. Ensure timely,
effective, confidential, and
appropriate responses to child
safeguarding issues.

If a person who works for, or on behalf of, ISSA is concerned about the possible abuse of a child, including concerns that relate to the behavior of a person working for, or on behalf of, ISSA, it must be reported.

Suspicious are to be reported to the local police or relevant local authority without undue delay and to the Child Safeguarding Focal Person (CSF) at ISSA.

The guiding principle here is that the safety of the child is always the most important consideration and the highest priority.

In case of an emergency and ongoing crime:

Call 112

In other cases, consult with ISSA's Child Safeguarding Focal Person (CSF):

Éva Izsák

E-mail: eizsak@issa.nl

Phone: +31 (0) 71 516 12 22

ACCOUNTABILITY

This Child Safeguarding Policy is developed to ensure the highest standards of professional behavior and personal practice to ensure no harm occurs in any situation to children during their involvement in ISSA activities, projects, and programs.

1.4 Definitions

CHILD

A child is defined as anyone under the age of 18 years. According to Article 19 of the Child Rights Convention, children should be protected from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse.

CHILD SAFEGUARDING

This refers to the policy and practice that ISSA has in place to protect children from harm.

2. Prevention

2.1 Child Safeguarding Focal-Person

A Child Safeguarding Focal-Person (CSF) will be appointed and will be responsible for:

- Promoting awareness and implementation of the Child Safeguarding Policy throughout the organization.
- Maintaining knowledge of best practices and statutory requirements.
- Acting as a source of support and information for staff on safeguarding issues.

The name and contact details of the CSF will clearly be displayed in the ISSA office, and new staff will be made aware of the role and responsibilities.

2.2 Child-safe Recruitment

- When recruiting staff, recruitment interviews should include a discussion on child safeguarding and protection.
- Adherence to ISSA's Child Safeguarding Policy is an expectation of all those affiliated with ISSA.

2.3 Code of Conduct

This Code of Conduct includes guidance on appropriate ethical behavior by adults towards children, and also by children towards other children. It has been developed with the best interests of the child as the primary consideration and should be interpreted in a spirit of transparency and common sense. ISSA aims for everyone, children and adults, to participate in a safe and happy way in ISSA's work and activities.

DO:

- Be aware of what constitutes child abuse and exploitation (included in the Child Safeguarding Policy) and understand its provisions.
- Know signs of abuse and report any suspicions immediately to the Child Safeguarding Focal Person.
- Ensure that you know who the Child Safeguarding Focal Person at ISSA is.
- Respect lines of authority and reporting procedures.
- Respect the basic rights of others by dealing with situations fairly, honestly and tactfully, and by treating people with dignity and respect.
- Treat all children equally: be inclusive and involve all children without discrimination.
- Work actively to ensure the highest levels of respect towards each other.
- Maintain high standards of personal and professional conduct both personally and in others.
- Protect the health, safety and well-being of yourself and others.
- Be aware of high-risk peer situations (e.g. unsupervised mixing of older and younger children and possibilities of discrimination against minors).
- Be aware of the potential for peer abuse (e.g. bullying of children).
- Be concerned about the way in which your language, actions and relationships with children could be perceived.
- Develop special measures/supervision to protect younger and especially vulnerable children from peer and adult abuse.
- Provide an enabling environment for children's personal, physical, social, emotional, moral and intellectual development.
- Encourage and respect children's voices and views.
- Limit access to and/or not expose children to any inappropriate electronic material.
- At all times respect the confidentiality of children's personal information.

DON'T:

- Engage in any form of sexual activity with children.
- Avoid any action or behavior that could be construed as poor practice or potentially abusive. For example, never behave in an inappropriate or sexually provocative manner.
- Do not discriminate, shame, humiliate, belittle or degrade children. This includes anything that may be considered emotional abuse (e.g. using language that will mentally or emotionally abuse a child or tell a story/show pictures that will mentally or emotionally abuse a child).

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- Do not hit or otherwise physically assault children.
 - Do not act in any way that may be abusive or place others at risk of abuse.
 - Do not condone violations of this code by others – staff, interns, consultants, etc.
 - Do not be alone with a child in any circumstances that might be questioned by others.
 - Do not allow children to engage in sexually provocative games with each other.
 - Do not kiss, hug, fondle, rub or touch a child in an inappropriate or culturally insensitive way (e.g. do not initiate physical contact, such as holding hands, unless initiated by the child).
 - Do not suggest inappropriate behavior or relations of any kind or encourage any crushes by a child.

Report any suspicious observations or alleged abuse as well as any circumstances or situations which may be subject to misinterpretation to the Child Safeguarding Focal Person.

2.4 Orientation

Orientation is essential to implement the Child Safeguarding Policy. At the beginning of the induction period (within one month of taking up the position), a staff, volunteer, consultant or ISSA Board member will receive an introduction to ISSA's Child Safeguarding Policy.

2.5 Child-safe Communication

ISSA's Child Safeguarding Policy also includes the principles ISSA employs when communicating externally about our work and the work of our members and partners. It contains general principles for ensuring children are kept safe at all times, as well as specific guidelines which must be followed by ISSA staff as well as photographers, video production agencies and journalists visiting ISSA's events. ISSA has developed special consent forms to prevent the use of children's images without consent.



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