

Receiving a Complaint:

Tips for the Child Safety Contact Person

Things to keep in mind

◆ **Be Fair**

You need to show support to the person raising the concern or complaint but you must avoid 'taking sides'. Listen and record the complaint for action through the complaints process.

◆ **Supporting Children**

Children will be frightened in this situation. Make sure you listen carefully to the child, treat them with respect, take them seriously and provide them with support and comfort.

◆ **Keep Confidences**

Only people involved in the complaints procedures should know about the complaint. You cannot promise to keep complaints/disclosures secret, but you can promise that those who need to take action will be informed. To a child, you can explain that sometimes a secret cannot be kept if it means someone like them will be hurt.

◆ **Questions**

Where serious allegations have been made avoid asking too many questions. Listen to the complainant's story and take notes. It's not your role to investigate the complaint - leave that to the professionals! (There have been times where cases have been weakened due to inappropriate questioning.)

◆ **Explain the process**

You should explain what will happen next. Let the complainant know exactly who will be told about the matter eg: your senior manager, the relevant government authority if appropriate and parents.

◆ **Investigate**

Matters that don't require reporting to the authorities will still need to be investigated by your organisation. You need to ask both parties what happened and then determine what action should be taken. Action could include changes in staffing arrangements, explanations, apologies and improved systems for the whole organisation.

◆ **Keeping kids connected**

Ask the child what the organisation can do to keep them safe and feeling welcome.