



Early Intervention - The Child Policy

Version 1.2
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1.1. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to outline Down South Therapy's (DST) approach and commitment to upholding the rights of the child in all aspects of service delivery as well as to:

- Maintain a service culture which promotes the rights and safety of all children including freedom of expression; choice and decision making and freedom from abuse, neglect, violence or exploitation.
- Create a service where the risks to the rights and wellbeing of the child are minimised
- Ensure that if DST becomes aware of an instance of abuse, violence, neglect or exploitation of a child, that DST responds professionally and compassionately to address the situation and abides by reporting procedures mandated by the relevant state and national legislation.

1.2. Scope

This policy relates to all Down South Therapy activities and applies to all employees, contractors, students, advocates, Directors and others who may act on behalf of Down South Therapy.

This Policy reflects requirements in:

- NDIS Practice Standards and Quality Indicators 2021
- NDIS Act 2013
- ECIA National Guidelines – Best Practice in Early Childhood Intervention 2016
- UN Convention on the Rights of the Child 1990
- UN Convention on the rights of persons with disabilities 2006
- Children and Community Services Act 2004

Related Policies:

1.01 Human Rights Policy
3.03 Serious Incident Reporting
5.03 Support Planning
7.01 Early Childhood Supports Policy
7.03 The Family Policy
7.04 Inclusion Policy
7.05 Collaboration Policy
7.06 Capacity Building Policy

1.1. The Child – Outcomes and Quality Indicators

Outcome

At DST, each child participant accesses supports that promote and respect their legal and human rights, support their development of functional skills, and enable them to participate meaningfully and be included in everyday activities with their peers.

Quality Indicators

- Knowledge and understanding of each participant's legal and human rights, and incorporation of those rights into everyday practice.
- Implementation of practices and procedures to manage risk with a focus on creating a safe environment for children.
- Compliance with all relevant state and territory legislation relating to the reporting of risk of harm to children.

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- Facilitation of the active involvement of the participant's support network in the participant's development.

1.2. DST Service Principals

All staff and Service Delivery at DST:

- Upholds the value and dignity of the families and children within our service;
- Ensures all children and families/carers are treated with courtesy and respect;
- Builds trusting relationships with the children, their families and carers;
- Provides services in an environment that is safe and welcoming for everyone;
- Advocates for the rights of children with disabilities and their families/carers.
- Supports and encourages families/carers to express their views and wishes of the service
- Supports families/carers to make choices about the services they receive
- Empowers our clients by helping them to understand their rights and providing information about service options and community supports;
- Makes everyone, including staff, children and families feel safe to raise concerns;
- Responds proactively to concerns and complaints when they arise
- Fosters collaboration with other organisations in upholding clients' human rights and preventing abuse and neglect.

1.3. Procedures

Staff, contractors and Directors of Down South Therapy will:

1. Treat all children and their families/carers with dignity and respect.
2. Uphold the rights of clients and their families/carers to express their views, choices and concerns, in relation to the service and effects it has on their lives.
3. Recognise the role of families, carers and other advocates in safeguarding the rights and well-being of people with disabilities.
4. Ensure that staff does not speak about clients/family members in front of them, but always discuss issues with clients/family members.
5. Support clients and their families/carers to make decisions about their lives by providing accurate, timely information about their rights and responsibilities, and the responsibilities of the service.
6. Work to prevent, as far as possible; any abuse, neglect, exploitation or other harm to its clients and their families/carers.
7. When it is made aware of any breach of human rights of a client or family/carer; respond promptly with strategies to address the issue; including reporting incidents and putting safeguards in place. (Policy and Procedures 1.4 Freedom from Abuse and Neglect)
8. Provide clients and their families/carers with information about other supports, and when needed, access to advocacy support and/or referral to legal advice.
9. Respect the privacy of children with disabilities and their families/carers.
10. Keep personal information about children and families/carers confidential.
11. Provide services in ways that pose the least restrictions on children and their families/carers; whilst still implementing safeguards to ensure their well-being is protected.
12. Ensure staff attend human rights and Zero Tolerance of Abuse training on a regular basis.
13. Ensure staff are trained in identifying and reporting risk to children and child abuse
14. DST staff will facilitate the active involvement of parents, caregivers and support networks to aid in the child's development
15. Child abuse and incident reporting procedures are readily visible and available in the office and electronically online.

1.4. DST Reporting of children at risk or experiencing abuse

DST takes the responsibility of risk reporting for children seriously and follows all state and national reporting legislation and requirements.

Staff who have concerns regarding the safety of a child are to immediately report their concerns to their Supervisor/Team Leader who will direct them to fill out an Incident Form and assist them through the relevant reporting process outlined in DST Policy 3.04 Serious Incident Reporting.

All circumstances that are deemed reportable will be reported to the NDIS Commission (if funded by NDIS) as well as to the WA Department of Communities, Child Protection and Family Support (CPFS).

Reports to CPFS will be made via phone call to the Central Intake Team on 1800 273 889 or via email cpduty@communities.wa.gov.au during working hours or the Crisis Care Unit 1800 199 008 after hours.

If a situation is to be reported then DST staff will also complete the Child Protection Referral Form.

If a child is in imminent danger or in a life-threatening situation the Western Australian Police will be called by dialling 000.

Further information about incident reporting, as well as the Child Protection Referral Form can be found in DST Policy 3.03 Serious Incident Reporting.

1.5. Review of the Policy

This policy will be reviewed on a two-yearly basis. However, if at any time the legislative, policy or funding environment is so altered that the policy is no longer appropriate in its current form, the policy will be reviewed immediately and amended accordingly