



Safeguarding

I N T H E E A R L Y Y E A R S

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Introduction to Safeguarding..

What is safeguarding?

Protecting children from harm, abuse, neglect, and exploitation while promoting their health, safety, and well-being.

Why it matters in Early Years Education

- Children are vulnerable due to their age and dependency
- Educators are front-line observers, protectors and advocates
- Safe children = thriving children



Core Principles of Safeguarding

- ✓ Children's welfare is paramount
- ✓ All children have equal rights to protection
- ✓ Partnerships with families and agencies are essential
- ✓ All staff have a duty of care and responsibility
- ✓ Transparency, accountability, and action are key





Educator Roles and Responsibilities..

Educator Responsibilities



Observe

Changes in behavior, physical signs



Record

Accurate, factual, confidential notes



Report

Follow your centre's reporting procedure



Protect

Create a safe, nurturing environment



Training and Culture

- ✓ All staff must complete **annual safeguarding training**
- ✓ Culture of **open communication and reflective practice**
- ✓ **Lead Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO)** in every centre
- ✓ Safeguarding discussions included in **staff meetings**



Types of Abuse to Be Aware Of

Type	Description	Red flags
Physical	Causing physical harm	Unexplained bruises, fear of adults
Emotional	Constant criticism, threats, rejection	Withdrawn, anxious, low self-esteem
Sexual	Inappropriate touching or exposure	Knowledge of sexual behavior inappropriate for age
Neglect	Failing to meet basic needs	Hunger, poor hygiene, medical needs unmet

Safe Recruitment Practices (EYFS-Aligned)..

Why safe recruitment matters?

Creating a safeguarding culture starts with hiring. Every person who works with children should be vetted not just for their qualifications, but for their character, behavior, and understanding of safeguarding.



Key Elements of Safe Recruitment



Clear Job Descriptions

Include safeguarding responsibilities in all ECE job descriptions.



Application Screening

Thoroughly review all applications, noting any gaps in employment.



Two References

At least one from a previous role working with children.



Police Checks / Criminal Record Checks

Canada: Vulnerable Sector Check through RCMP or local police
UAE: Police clearance certificate from home country and UAE (as per KHDA or MOE requirements)



Structured Interviews

Include **safeguarding scenario questions** to assess values and awareness.



Qualification & ID Verification

Ensure authenticity of early years credentials, degrees, and IDs.

Key Elements of Safe Recruitment



Right to Work Documentation

Confirm valid work permits/visas (especially critical in UAE).



Application Screening

All new hires undergo a **safeguarding induction** and monitored probation period.



Ongoing Suitability

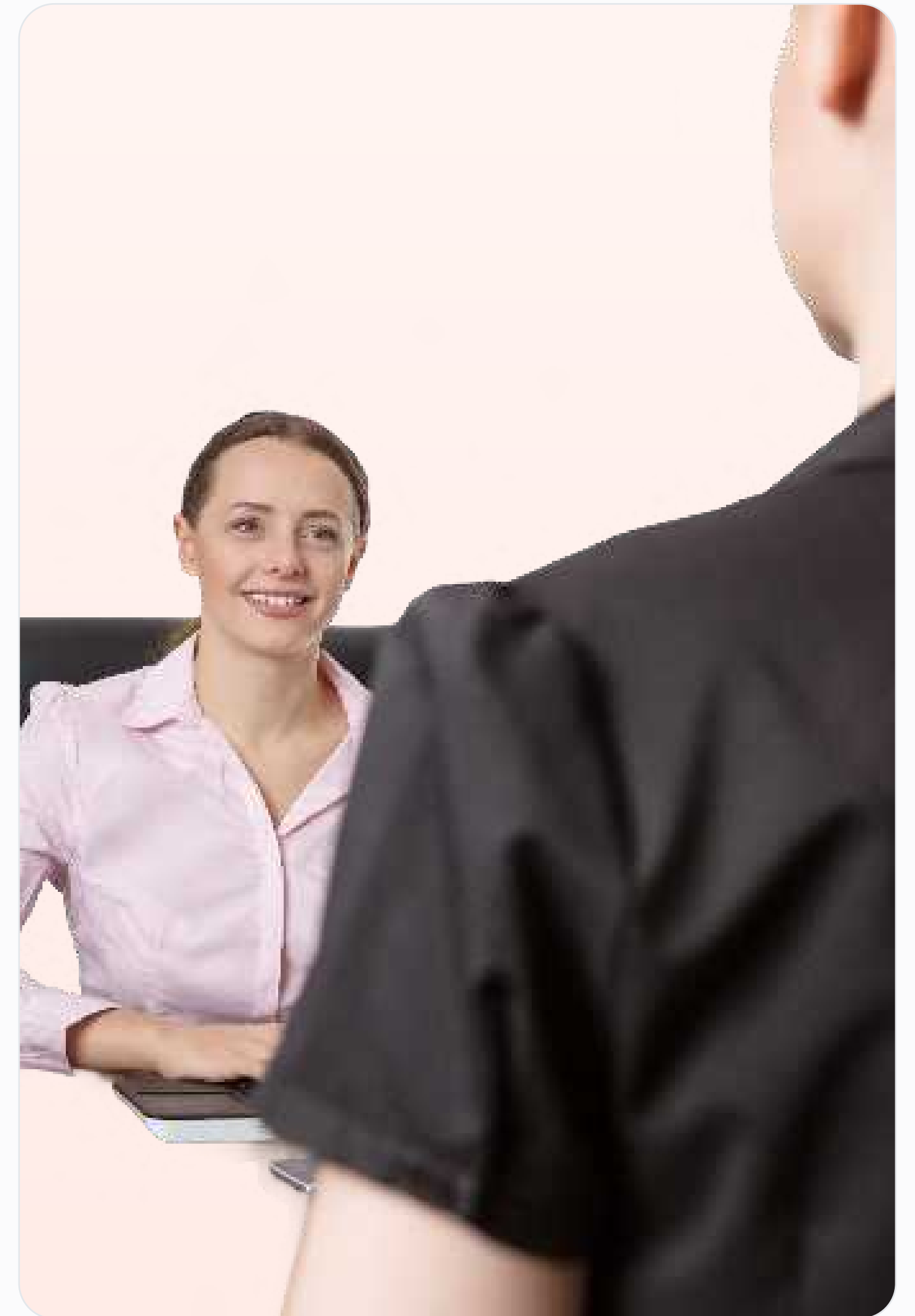
Annual declarations from staff affirming continued suitability to work with children.

Best Practice Tip

Hiring is the first opportunity to protect children, it sets the tone for everything that follows.

Maintain a central file for each staff member including:

- ✓ Interview notes
- ✓ Reference checks
- ✓ Police certificates
- ✓ Signed safeguarding agreements
- ✓ Training logs





Country-Specific Safeguarding Protocols..

Safeguarding Protocols: Canada 🇨🇦

Legal Framework

- Governed by **provincial/territorial Child Protection Acts**
- **Mandatory reporting:** All adults must report suspected abuse
- Reports go to local **Children's Aid Society / Child Welfare Authority**

Steps for Reporting

1. Immediately inform your **Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)**
2. Contact **local child protection services** (can vary by province)
3. Document all concerns and follow up internally

Resources

- **Ontario:** Children's Aid Society
- **Alberta:** Child Intervention Services
- **British Columbia:** MCFD



Safeguarding Protocols: UAE 🇦🇪

Legal Framework

- Governed by **Wadeema's Law** (Federal Law No. 3 of 2016 on Child Rights)
- **Mandatory reporting:** All professionals must report abuse
- Reports go to **Ministry of Interior Child Protection Centre**

Steps for Reporting

1. ImAlert your **Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)**
2. Report via the **Child Protection Centre hotline: 116111**
3. Notify **KHDA/MOE** if required (for licensed centres)

Resources

- Dubai Foundation for Women and Children
- Ministry of Interior Child Protection Centre
- Local police when immediate danger is present





Handling Disclosures & Concerns..

Handling Disclosures and Concerns

Do:

- Stay calm and listen
- Reassure them: "You're safe, I'm here for you."
- Write down exactly what they say (no interpretation)
- Follow centre protocol immediately

Don't:

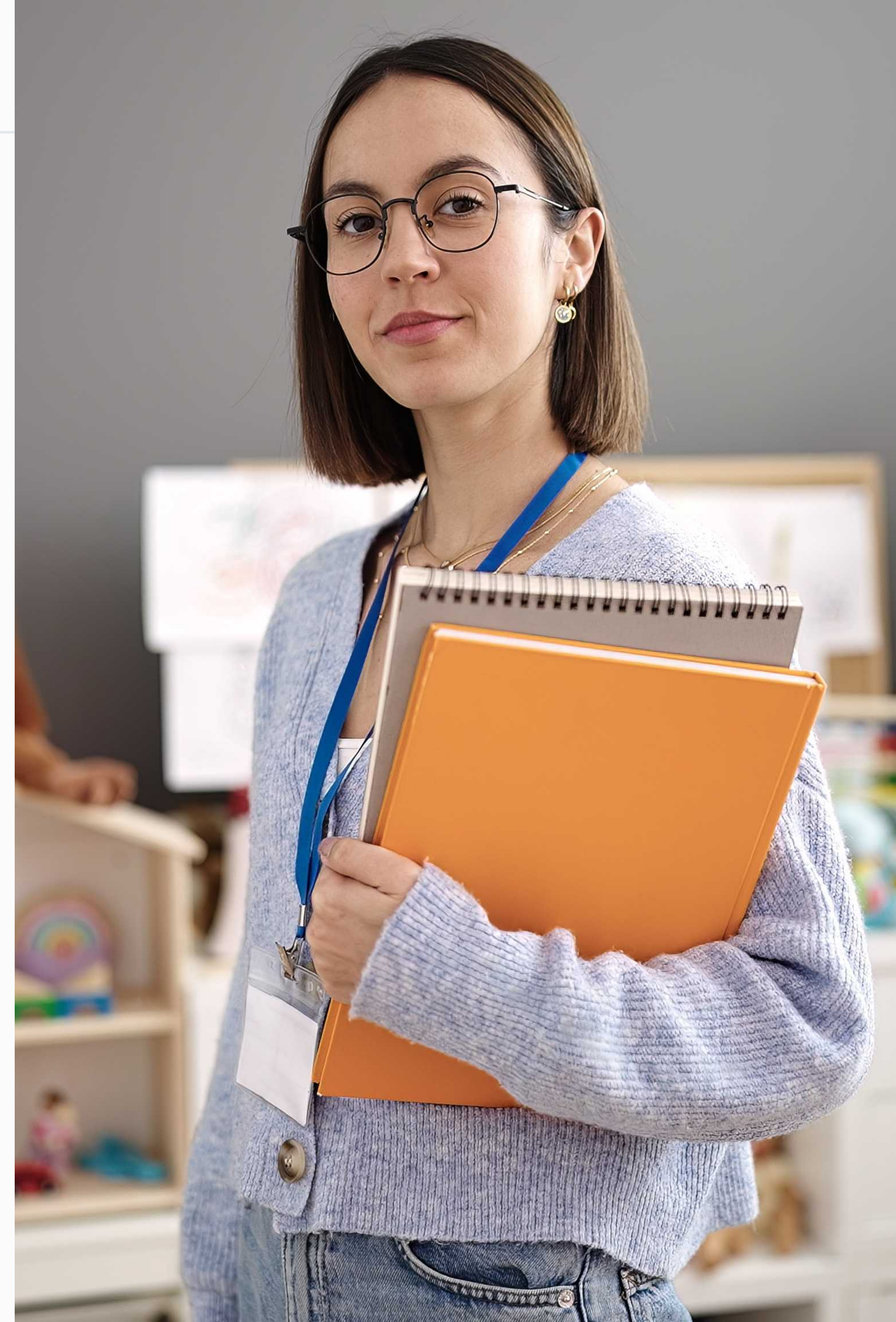
- Ask leading questions
- Promise to keep it secret
- Delay reporting

Documentation Best Practices

- ✓ Use a **secure safeguarding log**
- ✓ Record **date, time, child's exact words**, and observations
- ✓ Avoid assumptions or diagnoses
- ✓ Keep information **confidential and secure**

Responding to Concerns About Staff

- Any concern about an adult must be taken seriously
- Notify the **centre's DSL** immediately
- If concern involves the DSL, report directly to the **regional child protection authority**
- Suspension during investigation may be appropriate depending on severity





Partnering with Families & Centre Culture..

Partnering with Families

- ✓ Build trusting, respectful relationships
- ✓ Share **safety policies** at enrollment
- ✓ Educate parents about **signs of abuse and safe practices**
- ✓ Keep communication open, but always prioritize child welfare in conflicts

Creating a Safe Environment

- Safe arrival and dismissal protocols
- Staff never alone with a child behind closed doors
- Supervision at all times, including toileting and nap time
- Regular health & safety checks of premises and equipment



Red Flags in a Centre's Culture

- Fear-based discipline or secrecy
- Staff not understanding or following reporting processes
- Poor record-keeping or confidentiality breaches
- Children afraid to speak or disclose





Implementation and Reflection..

Setting Up for Success

Centre Checklist:

- ✓ Appoint a trained **Designated Safeguarding Lead**
- ✓ Establish clear **reporting procedures**
- ✓ Provide **annual training and refreshers**
- ✓ Display child protection contacts in staff room
- ✓ Conduct **regular safeguarding audits**



Safeguarding Training Reflection

Reflection Prompts for Educators:

- Do I know my centre's safeguarding lead?
- Do I feel confident identifying and reporting abuse?
- Are there children I'm worried about right now?
- How can I build stronger safeguarding habits?



Resources & Key Reminders..

Resources and Further Training

Canada 🇨🇦

- Canadian Centre for Child Protection
- [Provincial child protection agencies]

UAE 🇦🇪

- Ministry of Interior Child Protection Centre
- Dubai Foundation for Women and Children

Courses:

- Red Cross Child Abuse Prevention
- NSPCC (UK-based but internationally relevant)



Reminders

- ✓ Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility
 - ✓ Prevention is as important as intervention
 - ✓ Children trust us, let's honor that with vigilance, love, and action
- "Children are not things to be molded, but people to be unfolded." — *Jess Lair*



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