ECAP Child Safety Standards (v2)

Standard 1: Governance Standard

The Organization shall provide effective governance and have clear and effective documents concerning the structure, operations, and beliefs of the Organization that are consistent with Child safety.

Indicators & Comments

Governance

The Organization's approach to Child safety must rest on a good governance foundation. Good governing documents are an essential part of any Organization because they create the structure needed to support and steward the operations of the Organization.

INDICATORS	COMMENTS	EXAMPLES OF EVIDENCE
1.1 Commitment to Good Governance The Organization maintains a commitment to overall good governance and has governing, legal, and spiritual documents in place.	Useful governance documents may include the Constitution, Bylaws, Statement of Faith and Beliefs, Code of Conduct, and Lifestyle Statement(s). These might include theological statements on marriage, gender identity, final authority, etc. The Organization should reflect a commitment to healthy governance through a board that regularly meets to address governance matters, is committed to governance training, and with directors who each actively participate in board meetings.	Articles of Incorporation, Charter, Constitution, Bylaws, Statement of Faith and Beliefs, Code of Conduct, or Lifestyle Statement(s) Board meeting dates and meeting minutes (with attendance records) Board development plan, including orientation and training
1.2 Value Statements The Organization maintains spiritual and biblical value statements that define its commitment to protecting Children as image bearers of God. These values are reflected in standards including Codes of Conduct, defining sexual or abuse-related	*See Indicators 1.10 and 4.1* Applying biblical standards, the Organization should address gender identity and possible sex transition issues consistently with its documented theological statements and in a way that keeps Children safe. *Note: [ECAP Youth and Children's Worker Code of Conduct](#).* Examples include: ● Appropriate and inappropriate touch;	Value Statements regarding the value of Children in Child Protection Policies Code of Conduct that defines abuse as unacceptable, and other clear guidelines.

INDICATORS	COMMENTS	EXAMPLES OF EVIDENCE
offenses as unacceptable, maintaining acceptable boundaries with and among Children and Workers, and including clear spiritual guidelines.	• Appropriate and inappropriate communication between an adult Worker and a Child; • Avoiding one-on-one interaction in a private space with a Child not one's close relative; • Three rules for self-protection: to recognize inappropriate behavior, resist uncomfortable situations, report when the Child feels unsafe; • Boundaries and personal space. Organizations may also check with their insurer to see if additional requirements apply.	

Child Protection Program

A Child safety or protection policy is the single most important risk management tool in Organizations serving Children. A good Child protection policy protects those in an Organization's care, avoids unnecessary lawsuits, establishes a defense for the Organization and directors in a civil court case, and maintains the Organization's ongoing insurance coverage eligibility.

INDICATORS	COMMENTS	EXAMPLES OF EVIDENCE
1.3 Instituting a Child Protection Program & Appointing a Child Safety Coordinator and Child Safety Team The Organization Board institutes a Child Protection Program and approves policies and procedures. These policies and procedures outline roles and responsibilities related to Child protection for the board members,	Suggested Best Practice: Identify a qualified Worker who is designated Child Safety Coordinator alternate. Note: The Child Safety Coordinator should be appointed by leadership to champion and help ensure that the Child Protection Program is operating as intended and sustained. The Child Safety Coordinator should meet criteria for a Children's Worker and lead the Child Safety Team. The Child Safety Team may include representation from leaders within the Organization, Child Safety Coordinator, Workers, Parents, and other organizational stakeholders.	Documented Child Safety policies and procedures Policies and Procedures define roles and responsibilities of 1) board members, 2) executive leadership, and 3) Workers. Child Safety Coordinator and Child Safety Team are appointed (documented), with oversight responsibility of the Child Protection Program.

INDICATORS	COMMENTS	EXAMPLES OF EVIDENCE
executive leadership, and Workers. The Organization appoints a qualified Worker to serve as Child Safety Coordinator, and establishes a Child Safety Team to maintain and oversee the Child Protection Program.	We also advise board overseers to receive some measure of Child Safety Training, in order to be best informed on these issues. *See Indicator 5.7*	
1.4 Insurance Policy in Place The Organization is insured by (i) a general liability policy and (ii) Sexual Abuse/molestation coverage, each with appropriate coverage limits. The Organization's protocols are to maintain records of insurance policies and claims information permanently and securely, as part of the Organization's Record Retention policy.	Appropriate coverage limits will depend on the size and type of each organization. The amounts may change per industry standards (coverage for comparable organizations), and they may fluctuate depending on inflation and other economic conditions. Insurance policy coverage types and amounts should be sufficient for the risks involved with the Organization's program activities and facilities, based on recommendations from the Organization's insurance provider.	Documentation of (i) a general liability policy and (ii) Sexual Abuse/molestation coverage in place. Documentation of industry standards concerning these insurance policies for the individual Organization. Records of insurance policies and claims are securely retained.
1.5 Policy & Procedure Review The Organization provides for annual review of policies and procedures and compliance thereto, by the Child Safety Team with results provided to the Board.	Suggested Best Practices: ● These review measures may include Board review, staff review, legal review, or other consultant review, particularly to ensure legal compliance and to address any updates in legal areas, insurance coverage considerations, and best practices. ● The review may allow for a multi-year cycle with a certain percentage of	Policies require annual review of policies and procedures and compliance by the Child Safety team. Evidence of annual review reports (with dates) and minutes from Board meetings (with dates) indicating annual review results were submitted to the board.

INDICATORS	COMMENTS	EXAMPLES OF EVIDENCE
	Child safety policies and procedures to be reviewed each year.	

Record Retention

Maintaining documentation is a key to demonstrating due diligence in screening and managing your Workers and operations.

INDICATORS	COMMENTS	EXAMPLES OF EVIDENCE
1.6 Personnel Record Management The Organization maintains Personnel records of employment and other related work materials for every Worker, including application, consent forms, interview notes, reference checks, waivers, background check, signed policies, training records, and discipline. Documents are kept in a secure, locked cabinet, or, if kept electronically, are stored securely and backed up on a regular basis.	Suggested Best Practice: The Organization may prioritize data privacy including compliance with applicable statutes. The Organization retains files according to employment best practices in the applicable jurisdiction. Additional information about performance review, training, or discipline will be added to the file over time. The Organization maintains accurate records of interviews, including time and location, names of people in the interview, general notes from the interview, and answers to a standard set of questions (*see Indicator 3.9*).	Personnel records (application, consent forms, interview notes, reference checks, waivers, background check, signed policies, training records, discipline) for all employees and workers are documented and accessible. Records are stored in a locked cabinet or stored on a server securely and regularly backed up.
1.7 Child Abuse Record Retention Any allegations of Child abuse, investigations, incident reports, or inquiries are documented, and the files are maintained permanently, securely, and confidentially.	Note: The statute of limitations on Child abuse litigation varies in different jurisdictions and continues to change. Documents may be maintained electronically or in hard-copy versions, but all such storage should comport with objectively reasonable security measures.	Files of Child abuse allegations, investigations, incident reports, or inquiries are documented.

INDICATORS	COMMENTS	EXAMPLES OF EVIDENCE
1.8 Participant Record Retention As applicable, participant, student, or camper records should also be maintained.	Student, camper, or participant records may include registration, waivers, applications, check in/check out records, or other related documentation that includes program activities, dates, and contact information. Suggested Best Practice: Organizations should seek professional legal advice regarding the length of time they should retain such records. If approved by an attorney, organizations should consider implementing a standard 10-year digital record retention policy.	Participant, student, or camper records (registration, waivers, applications, check in/check out records, or other related documentation that includes program activities, dates, contact information, etc.), digitally or physically retained.

Policies and Procedures

Policies demonstrate the Organization's commitment to Child safety. They provide guidelines for Workers to serve well. Procedures lay out a defined sequence of steps to follow based on policies. Creating a robust set of Child safety policies and procedures both prevents abuse and gives clear guidance in responding to violations. Policies and Procedures will be referenced throughout the ECAP Standards.

INDICATORS	COMMENTS	EXAMPLES OF EVIDENCE
1.9 Commitment to Child Safety In policies and procedures, the Organization sets forth an explicit commitment to take reasonable measures to manage safety for Children in the Organization's care, take reasonable measures to protect Workers in Children's ministry and respond appropriately to allegations of abuse or Child Neglect. The Organization maintains a Zero Tolerance policy for	Organizational awareness of any prior abuse allegations may help current leadership understand the importance of Child safety standards and measures, consistent with the ECAP accreditation process. Suggested Best Practice: The Organization may decide to form relationships and agreements with multiple outside resources as needed for guidance, response, and care concerning the safety of Children.	Policies and procedures reflect a commitment to safety for Children and Workers, with response procedures for allegations of abuse or neglect in place.

INDICATORS	COMMENTS	EXAMPLES OF EVIDENCE
Child Sexual Abuse. The Organization will terminate any Worker who is a Child Sexual Abuse offender who has admitted to, had a finding of, or been convicted of Child Sexual Abuse.		
1.10 Policy & Procedure Agreement Governing Board members and Workers must understand and agree in writing to the Organization's policies and procedures surrounding Child safety.	Suggested Best Practice: This commitment may be agreed upon in writing annually. This may be in the form of an annual disclosure statement. Such measures should include a written acknowledgement and agreement to comply with Organization's Child safety policies and procedures by Workers who care for Children. *See ECAP Youth and Children's Worker Code of Conduct acknowledgement form.*	Written, signed, and dated policy and procedure acknowledgement forms from all Governing Board members and Workers.
1.11 Outside Organization Compliance The Organization requires that any outside or unaffiliated organization, such as churches and other ministry groups with participating Children, confirm that it has and complies with Child Protection policies and protocols.	The Organization therefore should either make such expectations clear to outside users or confirm that such similar safety measures are in place for use of the Organization's facilities.	Required Facility Use Form for outside users. Evidence that these Facility Use Forms are used with date and signature of leader or officer. Facility Use Forms include an acknowledgement and signed agreement to comply with the Child Protection Plan.
1.12 Definitions of Abuse Policies contain clear and accurate legal definitions of abuse, Child Neglect, and maltreatment.	*See ECAP "Definitions" for additional detail.* Check or reference state or jurisdictional definitions of abuse.	Acceptable legal definitions of abuse, Child Neglect, and maltreatment are included in policies.

INDICATORS	COMMENTS	EXAMPLES OF EVIDENCE
1.13 Internal Complaint Policy The Organization maintains an internal complaint policy that involves a publicly shared communication channel for receiving complaints, and an internal review team that will evaluate and manage complaints.	This complaint channel serves primarily as a way to express concerns, questions or comments about breaches in the organization's Child Protection Program.	Policy Complaint communication channel Communication of complaint channel such as phone number or email.

Standard 2: Child Safety Operations

The Organization shall have clear and effective written policies in place to guide Workers, for day-to-day and other regular operations at the Organization's location(s), for all offsite activities, and for specific care considerations. The Organization shall prioritize transparency and Child safety in all aspects of Organizational activities and operations.

Indicators & Comments

General Program Activities

ECAP Governance, Training, Screening, and Response Indicators fully address an Organization's Child safety policies, protocols, and practices for all Children's program activities. With respect to ongoing program activities, such matters are particularly important for communicating rules and boundaries concerning appropriate behavior for Children and their Parents as well as guidelines for resisting inappropriate behavior and reporting it. The following Indicators additionally apply to program activities, more specifically as identified below.

Access Control and Supervision

The Organization's policies should be appropriately tailored to address Children's varying age ranges, such as babies, younger Children, and older Children. Access control should be applied based on how the Organization assigns Children's activities based on age and any other security concerns.

The ability to see down a hallway, across a field, or into a window helps to ensure physical and emotional safety. The Organization will take reasonable measures to enhance the line of sight for Workers to keep all activities in clear view and to increase lighting in dark areas or places where isolation, misconduct, and/or abuse may possibly occur. Internet and digital access will be appropriately controlled and monitored, as well as any images taken of Children.

Organizations may have consultants, contractors, or other visitors who could potentially have access to Children, such as Parents, vendors, or other service Personnel. These visitors are not screened or trained by the Organization, but by necessity of their services, could have access to Children. To protect Children from potential harm from all such facility visitors, the Organization should have written protocols to follow.

INDICATORS	COMMENTS	EXAMPLES OF EVIDENCE
2.1 Access Control and Safety in Children's Areas The Organization ensures that designated Children's areas are well-lit and fully visible in appropriate physical space.	The Organization's signage indicates appropriate locations to pick up and drop off Children. Workers are trained to know appropriate locations and procedures for pick up and drop off. Suggested Best Practice: ● Ideally, restrooms will include facilities designed for small Children. Consider checking local/state licensing	Designated Children's space is well-lit and fully visible. No places for children to hide or for adults to isolate a child within the access-controlled area. Designated Children's space is access-controlled, and managed by check-in/check-out procedures with documented attendance and check-in/check-out dates and times.

INDICATORS	COMMENTS	EXAMPLES OF EVIDENCE
Age-appropriate access controlled areas are managed by check-in and check-out procedures with attendance being recorded, as necessary.	rules as far as the amount of space needed per Child. ● The Organization requires windows as appropriate, with guidelines as to appropriate privacy for the activity involved (e.g., clear, frosted, one-way mirror, or reflective). ● The Organization implements safety measures, eliminating access to any potential hiding spots. This includes (but is not limited to) closets, empty rooms, under bleachers, restrooms, hedges, fences, signs, and using mirrors on walls around corners.	
2.2 Visitor Access Policies The Organization's policies address visitor access to designated access control areas. Visitors are visibly identified by the Organization.	*See Indicator 2.1* Visitors include Parents, general visitors, vendors, contract workers, and guests. Suggested Best Practices: ● The Organization communicates expected conduct, appearance, and any limitations on access within the property. ● The Organization requires such visitors to sign a statement acknowledging the protocol before accessing. Signed statements are maintained in the Organization's files. ● The Organization provides appropriate identification (such as a badge or name tag) that will be worn at all times while in access controlled areas. ● The Organization obtains background checks for visitors who are regularly onsite for activities involving Children. Based on frequency of visiting, further screening may be necessary. Additional procedures may include: ● All necessary background checks are completed; ● Visitors must never be alone with a Child who is not their close relative	Policies address visitor access, including access to Children, check-in/check-out, and visible visitor identification. Visitor sign-in sheets, name tags, and other supplies are present at access control check points.

INDICATORS	COMMENTS	EXAMPLES OF EVIDENCE
2.3 Restroom and Hygiene Policies The Organization's policies address restroom privacy and accessibility, based on age appropriateness. This would include diapering policies for babies and younger children.	Suggested Best Practice: Organizational policies may state that adults should not be one-on-one with Children in a private space, and they may provide guidance about peers being together in the restroom. *See Indicator 4.8* Hygiene and health matters are important and may be customized depending on Children's age ranges (e.g., babies to be diapered, younger Children with toileting and other needs, older Children with more independence).	Documented restroom and diapering policies for babies and younger children. Facility restrooms provide privacy, with locking doors, based on age appropriateness.
2.4 Worker Ratios Policies define appropriate Worker/Child ratios.	Applicable local/state licensing rules should be used as a benchmark.	Policies document acceptable Worker/Child Ratios.
2.5 Minor Worker Supervision Organizational policies require that minor Workers serving Children are to be supervised by another adult Worker.		Policies require minor Workers serving Children to be supervised by an adult Worker.
2.6 Facility Monitoring The Organization takes reasonable measures to monitor the premises.	Monitoring may take place with Workers and/or with security cameras.	Video monitoring, patrols, law enforcement presence, staffing, and other measures may be provided and documented along with Worker training.
2.7 Technology Use Monitoring The Organization ensures that access to the Internet and other technology within the Organization are appropriately controlled to provide for the safety of	Wifi password protection and/or content blockers may help control access. Electronic device use policy may restrict digital access at specified times or during designated events. Recommend prohibiting electronic device use during overnight activities.	Policies reflect rules for technology use. The Organization's technology has content blockers. Workers are trained on how to handle if technology is being used inappropriately by another Worker or Child.

INDICATORS	COMMENTS	EXAMPLES OF EVIDENCE
Children. Use of technology will be properly monitored.	Suggested Best Practices: WiFi password should be changed monthly, quarterly, or periodically.	

Program Activities Available to Public

Program activities available to the public or otherwise beyond the Organization's regular participants merit additional attention.

INDICATORS	COMMENTS	EXAMPLES OF EVIDENCE
2.8 Child Safety for Special Events Organizational policies include appropriate provision for special events that may be open to the public.	Special events include annual, seasonal programs, such as graduations, VBS, performances, recitals, etc. Suggested Best Practice: Public-access events should be appropriately monitored just as with other Organizational activities, including clarification of when a Child's Parents remain responsible. Such a process should reflect similar safety precautions as used for regular attenders. Special events and activities should have a formal process for Children to register. See ECAP Article, "Child Safety for Church Special Events."	Provision is made for events that are not a part of the ministry's regular short-term (weekly or monthly) schedule.
2.9 Use of Pictures/Videos of Children The Organization's policies address ministry use of picture and video images of Children.	Suggested Best Practice: Such matters may be addressed through consent and waiver forms, disclaimers in bulletins, programs, and/or website statements.	Policies address the use of pictures and videos of Children.

Ministry Offsite Activities

Because offsite activities may involve different risks than onsite activities, the Organization should implement protocols that will protect Children from potential harm, adequately inform Parents, and protect the Organization from liability.

INDICATORS	COMMENTS	EXAMPLES OF EVIDENCE
2.10 Ministry Pre-Approval for Offsite Activities Organizational policies identify when ministry offsite activities must be pre-approved by designated leadership. Organizational policies clarify that ministry's Child safety standards apply only to pre-approved, ministry-sponsored offsite activities, and that Parents are responsible for their own child safety measures when engaging in activities that are not so expressly authorized.	Suggested Best Practices: Such identification should include selection of any overnight accommodations. Clarification may be important particularly for home or other community groups, as further addressed in *Indicator 2.16*. Ministry pre-approval should additionally apply to selection of any overnight accommodations for ministry offsite activities involving overnight stays.	Policies clarify when offsite activities must be pre-approved by designated leadership. Policies clarify that Child safety standards are applied to offsite activities when approved by leadership, and that Parents retain responsibility for Children when not authorized by leadership.
2.11 Parent Notification for Offsite Activities Organizational policies require Parents to be notified prior to offsite activities.	● Parents will be notified of offsite events in writing (such as by email) prior to said events. ● Parents will be advised of identified risks, precautions, sleeping arrangements, transportation, supervision, and other relevant information. ● Parents must sign a waiver and release of liability as part of the permission form, including medical information/permission as needed. Suggested Best Practices: ● Parent notification should be provided at least one week in advance.	Policies require notification of Parents prior to offsite activities. Emails, letters, flyers providing information regarding offsite events.

INDICATORS	COMMENTS	EXAMPLES OF EVIDENCE
	• It is recommended that the Organization predetermine how to handle over-the-counter medications and prescription drugs. • Note that waivers and releases may not be legally enforceable with respect to Children, but they are nevertheless recommended. Such forms can provide valuable information to families, deter potential adverse claims, and provide evidence of a knowing assumption of risk in any later litigation. • An event-specific consent and waiver form is appropriate for each offsite trip/event, with particular identification of any notable risks or recommended precautions (e.g., strenuous exercise involved, safety equipment needed). A digital format may be used for the completed form.	
2.12 Document Accessibility for Offsite Activities When conducting offsite activities, relevant forms must be accessible to those Workers supervising offsite trips.	Such information may be especially important for medical care authorizations and medication handling. Volunteers and staff should also be provided with all relevant contact information for carrying out offsite activities. *See Indicator 1.8*	Policies indicate the relevant forms for offsite activities, and require Workers to have these readily accessible, either digitally or physical copies. Examples: Medical forms, waivers, emergency contact information, insurance details, and organizational emergency contact instructions. Workers serving on offsite activities are trained on handling relevant forms.
2.13 Supervision for Offsite Activities Organizational policies require appropriate supervision for Children, including appropriately adjusted ratios of Workers to Children for offsite activities.	*See Indicator 2.14 for Overnight Activities* Suggested Best Practices: • The Organization may consider special arrangements to protect Children in particular circumstances, such as line-of-sight arrangements for bathroom facilities and sleeping rooms. • With respect to overnight lodging arrangements, the Organization may require that adults in the host home	Policies require supervision and ratio guidelines for offsite activities.

INDICATORS	COMMENTS	EXAMPLES OF EVIDENCE
	complete screening and training for Child safety. ● Overnight lodging arrangements should include separating host homes by gender and age grouping and ensuring that sleeping arrangements are separate from the other adults in the household.	
2.14 Policies for Overnight Activities Organizational policies require the following regarding overnight activities: ● Gender-appropriate supervision must be provided. ● Children are not allowed to leave the overnight event. Any exceptions are noted on the signed permission form. ● Adults traveling with the group must be screened and trained Workers. ● Sleeping areas for Children must be separated by gender and age grouping.	● Children should not be left alone in hotel rooms. ● An adult not closely related must not be alone with a minor in a room. Suggested Best Practices: ● The Organization may have additional requirements, such as requiring Workers to be unrelated, or requiring that overnight activities with mixed genders must be supervised by at least two Workers of opposite gender. ● For common sleeping areas, an appropriate number of screened Workers (at least two) should be assigned. This number will vary by type of Organization/event ● The Organization may include in its policies that during overnight events, Children of the opposite gender should not be allowed in each other's rooms or lodging accommodations for any reason. ● Depending on the situation, the Organization may decide that sleeping areas for Children should be separated from those of adults, and that Workers will not sleep in the same bed with a Child unless closely related to the Child. Some recommendations for housing include: ● Booking rooms in one wing in hotel/motel; ● Encouraging Parents to accompany groups and stay as families;	Policies require guidelines for overnight activities, complying to the details listed.

INDICATORS	COMMENTS	EXAMPLES OF EVIDENCE
	- Booking suites of more than one bedroom so that Workers can stay in one room and Children in the other; - Having rooms with adjoining doors with adults in one room and Children in the other. Note that applicable state and local laws may mandate Parental screening and training.	
2.15 Transportation Policies Organizational policies provide guidance on transportation of Children.	- Parents are encouraged to drop off/pick up at the event location. - Policies should address ways to transport Children for Child safety. - Workers who transport Children not related to them on behalf of the Organization are approved by leadership for Child safety. - The Organization obtains a copy of a valid driver's license for each driver. Suggested Best Practices: - Check with the Organization's insurance company on transportation requirements. - Prohibit Children from being left alone in a vehicle and prohibit adults from being alone in a vehicle with a single Child not their own Child (with exceptions for medical emergencies). - No fewer than two Workers should be in each vehicle transporting Children; exceptions to this policy should only occur when leadership and Parents are informed and there is more than one Child in the vehicle (avoiding isolation). - Drivers should have at least five years of driving experience in good standing (as evidenced by a driver history check). - Check with your insurance carrier on your organization's driver coverage during official capacity and the need for documentation of the driver's personal insurance coverage.	Policies require these guidelines for transportation.

INDICATORS	COMMENTS	EXAMPLES OF EVIDENCE
2.16 Home/Small Group Policies Organizational policies require the following regarding home/small groups: ● Small groups must be approved by leadership. ● Childcare Workers must be screened and trained. ● Parents must be notified of activities that Children will participate in, including games, activities, or any media that will be viewed.	Suggested Best Practices: Organizational policy may state that for small groups, one of the following criteria are recommended: ● Approved ratios of Workers are supervising Children. ● When families attend with their Children, the Parent is responsible for the care and supervision of his or her Child, whether the Child remains in the same room as the Parent or in an alternative location in the home. ● Either two Workers are assigned to supervise the Children, or one Worker supervises while a second Worker monitors periodically during the event. ● Particular attention should be given for any potential safety concerns regarding interactions between older and younger Children. ● For small groups, taking attendance and retaining attendance records is recommended. ● Clarifying information is contained in written policies or protocols communicating that Parents in offsite home/small groups that are not pre-approved, ministry-sponsored offsite activities are responsible for their own childcare arrangements and related safety considerations.	Policies require these guidelines for home/small groups. List of approved events and activities are maintained on record. List of screened and trained Workers are retained on file.

Parent Orientation Communication

For Parents, the Organization shall provide an orientation letter or similar communication that provides information about Child abuse. A Parent orientation communication informs families of the Organization's policies and procedures and communicates information to protect Children from abuse. This communication helps to enhance Child safety and trust with Parents.

INDICATORS	COMMENTS	EXAMPLES OF EVIDENCE
2.17 Parent Notification of Child Protection Program	Suggested Best Practices: Such communication may include the Organization's abuse reporting policy,	The Organization has a prepared letter that is sent out to Parents that provide an overview of the Child Protection Program.

INDICATORS	COMMENTS	EXAMPLES OF EVIDENCE
and Abuse Prevention Policies The Organization communicates via emailed letter or other formal communication to Parents an overview of the Child Protection Program and how to provide age-appropriate abuse prevention education for their Children. The Organization maintains clear guidelines for specific information to be included in such communication.	offsite and social media policies, home visitation policy, and Worker Code of Conduct. The written communication may also include: the definition of abuse, characteristics of the grooming behavior of predators, how to prevent abuse, how to respond and report abuse, how to discuss prevention and abuse with Children, information about bullying and cyberbullying, and contact information for the Organization.	This letter is sent out on a regular basis to Parents. This may be annually, when first registering for program activities, start of school, etc.

Standard 3: Screening

The Organization shall develop and implement a detailed screening process for Workers that includes a written application, waiting period, personal interview (or other sufficient personal interaction), reference checks, and a background check from a reputable provider. If at any point in the screening process, prior unlawful or immoral activity is uncovered, the Organization shall deal with the applicant based on clearly defined thresholds for disqualification.

Indicators & Comments

Screening Process

Careful vetting of Workers is critical for screening out potential Perpetrators.

INDICATORS	COMMENTS	EXAMPLES OF EVIDENCE
3.1 Worker Screening The Organization screens all Workers.	*See Indicator 3.12* • Note that a background check requirement may not apply to Child Workers due to typical confidentiality of Children's criminal background information. • As part of the screening process, the Organization may include methods to determine whether its Workers meet the spiritual standards required to serve.	Record of screening and screening results for all Workers. Testimony from Workers confirming screening process.
3.2 Worker Screening Process The Organization implements a robust process for screening Workers before having access to Children. Policies contain clear and accurate descriptions of the roles and responsibilities of all Workers, including screening requirements. Policies require Workers to notify the Organization if anything has changed	*See Indicator 3.14* The Organization may require an annual renewal application requesting information regarding any arrests or convictions within the prior year. Failing to disclose may be cause for disciplinary action including termination. It is recommended that the Organization makes sure to comply with state laws about criminal history in implementing such a requirement.	Screening process for Workers is documented. Policies and training prohibit access to Children before the screening process is completed. Policies accurately describe Workers' responsibilities, including screening requirements, and require Workers to notify the Organization concerning potential change in qualification to work with Children.

INDICATORS	COMMENTS	EXAMPLES OF EVIDENCE
regarding their qualification to work with Children.		

Volunteer Waiting Period

Predators will often look for the path of least resistance to gain access to Children. By requiring a waiting period for Volunteers, the Organization may deter predators. A waiting period provides the Organization with more first-hand experience with the prospective Volunteer, offering insight into a prospective Volunteer's gifts, character, behavior, and proclivities.

INDICATORS	COMMENTS	EXAMPLES OF EVIDENCE
3.3 Volunteer Waiting Period The Organization maintains a stated policy addressing how long a prospective Volunteer must be associated with the Organization before being allowed to work with Children. The appropriate waiting period may depend on the needs of the ministry.	Child Protection training may be conducted during this waiting period. Suggested Best Practices: ● Six-Month Rule—A prospective Volunteer is required to attend programming at least once a month. The six-month rule allows at least six opportunities to observe this individual. This may be reduced to three months, depending on the needs of the ministry (especially church plants and fast-growing ministries). ● Independent references from a prior ministry immediately before attending the Organization may reduce the need for a full waiting period if the affiliated ministry is similar in beliefs and structure or is of the same denomination. ● It may be an option for someone to shadow a Worker under their direct supervision for the waiting period, or part of it.	Policies define a Volunteer waiting period. Testimony of Workers that indicate sufficient waiting period.

Applications

The Organization must use a formal application for those who may have access to Children, including Workers. Application includes questions about the applicant, references for character, work habits, personal life, and work history.

INDICATORS	COMMENTS	EXAMPLES OF EVIDENCE
3.4 Applicant Identity Verification The Organization's written application calls for full information on legal name and current physical address, as well as places of residence for at least the previous five (5) years. The applicant's identity is to be verified by checking a government-issued photo ID.	Suggested Best Practice: The Organization may retain a copy of the applicant's photo ID as part of the application materials. It is recommended that the Organization accept only "REAL ID Act" compliant ID's. Old IDs are more easily falsified, and the REAL ID Act sets federal standards for design elements to ensure valid IDs. Find out more here: https://www.dhs.gov/real-id/real-id-faqs	Written application requires legal name, current address, places of residence for at least the previous 5 years. Copies of government-issued photo ID are retained with written applications. Examples of completed applications with the above requirements are retained.
3.5 Applicant's Work & Volunteer History The Organization's written application calls for the applicant's work and volunteer history for at least the previous five (5) years.	Written application including but not limited to the following information: ● Name and address of Organizations; ● Name, phone, and email address of supervisors; ● Nature of position; ● Duration and reason for leaving.	Written application requires work and volunteer history for at least the previous 5 years, including the name and address of Organizations, the contact information of supervisors, the nature of position, and the duration and reason for leaving. Examples of completed applications with the above requirements are retained.
3.6 Applicant's Reference Checks The Organization's written application requires two to four professional and personal reference checks.	Suggested Best Practices: ● The Organization may require the applicant to sign a waiver of liability so that the reference can answer questions candidly. ● The Organization may ask for the following references (with name, address, phone, and email): ● Professional reference (current or former supervisor, co-worker, person in the same field); ● Personal reference (pastor, friend, teacher, coach); ● Reference from a family member (though this may not be reliable in some cases); or	Written application requires two to four professional and personal reference checks. Examples of completed applications with the above requirements are retained. Documentation or notes of the Organization following up on reference checks during an applicant's screening process.

INDICATORS	COMMENTS	EXAMPLES OF EVIDENCE
	● Reference from a person of the opposite gender. ● The Organization may request the reference to provide an additional reference as an additional safeguard and to avoid insularity.	
3.7 Applicant's Character Checks In the application process the Organization calls for relevant information related to spiritual character, including questions about sexual morality and substance abuse.	Such areas may be addressed through the interview process or in a written application. *Note: ECAP Youth and Children's Worker Screening Questionnaire* *See Indicators 3.14 and 3.15* Suggested Best Practices include the following: ● Moral history disclosures may be requested consistent with Indicators on Negative History. ● An applicant's use of pornography may indicate potential risk to Children, and disclosure of any use of Child pornography should immediately disqualify any applicant. ● The application may include relevant questions regarding areas that could indicate a potential risk to Children. ● Consider screening the applicant's social media activity. Note: Some states have "ban the box" and similar laws that prohibit pre-employment inquiries about criminal backgrounds. These laws apply only to Employees, not Volunteers. For Organizations in such jurisdictions, inquiries may be made only after an Employee is hired. A satisfactory result should be a condition for continued employment with the Organization. (This issue is similar to Employee drug testing.)	Application process requires information from the applicant related to personal spiritual character Examples of completed applications with the above requirements are retained. Notes captured from interviews should be recorded and stored in Worker files.
3.8 Standard Reference Check Questions	*See Indicator 4.14* Suggested Best Practice:	A standard set of questions for reference checks are documented.

INDICATORS	COMMENTS	EXAMPLES OF EVIDENCE
The Organization uses a standard set of questions in reference checks. The Organization will evaluate responses from references for "red flags."	Prepared questions for references may include the following: ● How long have you known this applicant? ● What is your relationship to this applicant? ● Would you be comfortable placing your Children in the care of this applicant? ● Have you ever heard of or known the applicant to use harsh and/or abusive language with a Child? ● Is this person stable and spiritually mature in interactions with others, with reliable character? ● Do you feel this applicant has the ability to follow rules and guidelines? ● Would you work with this applicant again? ● Are you aware of the applicant having any traits or tendencies that could pose a threat to Children or others? ● Are you aware of any reason why the applicant should not work with Children or others? ● Is there anything in the applicant's lifestyle or past that would call into question his or her ability to work with Children or others? ● Anything else you would like to share about this applicant?	Documentation of the Organization using these questions during the screening process.

Personal Interviews

A personal interview allows the Organization to get a sense of the Worker's general well-being and spiritual state. While the application has factual data, the interview shows personality traits and allows for conversation about the applicant's answers. This is also a good place to talk about job expectations and responsibilities, review the policies and procedures of the Organization, and answer questions from the applicant. An interview should always be done by trained and authorized ministry leaders. Interviews should be the rule, not the exception, as noted below.

INDICATORS	COMMENTS	EXAMPLES OF EVIDENCE
3.9 Standard Interview Questions The Organization maintains a standard	*Note: ECAP Youth and Children's Worker Screening Questionnaire* *See Indicator 1.6, 3.14, and 4.14*	A standard set of interview questions is documented.

INDICATORS	COMMENTS	EXAMPLES OF EVIDENCE
set of questions to be used in interviews.		Documentation of using the standard set of interview questions in the screening process. Interviews conducted on all applicants within 12 months of audit.
3.10 Provision for Personal Interview Exceptions The Organization provides for exceptions to personal interviews in limited circumstances.	Exceptions to the personal interview requirement may be appropriate when all the above-listed interview goals have been met by other means, such as through the applicant's long-standing involvement with the Organization, his/her close relationship with the interviewer or other leadership, or through other verification of the applicant's suitability for service and clear understanding of expectations and Organizational policies and procedures. If the Organization does not carry out an interview, the reasons for not doing so shall be documented as part of an applicant's screening materials.	The Organization defines acceptable reasons for exception. Documentation for exemptions are recorded in Worker files.

Background Checks

The Organization must take affirmative steps to exclude persons unsuitable for Children's ministry from access to Children, including conducting a background check. However, there is no universal background check for all jurisdictions. Background screening providers rely on various authorities and databases. Not all are equally reliable. The Organization should evaluate the type of background check required based on a particular Worker's role. A background screening provider should offer different screening options based on the Organization's unique needs. The Organization should also ensure that the background screening provider has a reputable history with a reliable database. Reference checks from past places of employment or Volunteer work may be particularly helpful for assessing Child safety matters, preferably with accompanying applicant waivers to promote candid disclosure of information.

INDICATORS	COMMENTS	EXAMPLES OF EVIDENCE
3.11 Background Screening Provider Selection The Organization selects a reputable background check screening provider on the basis of generally accepted criteria.	Guidelines when selecting a reputable background check provider: ● Does the provider have a robust menu of services (different levels of background checks based on Personnel needs)? ● Does the provider have the ability to process Volunteer applications for working with Children? ● What is the cost for service access or processing fee?	The Organization documents its selection of a reputable background check screening provider.

INDICATORS	COMMENTS	EXAMPLES OF EVIDENCE
	- What is the average turnaround time for a background check? - What additional resources does the provider offer (risk management resources, training, documentation, etc.)? - Is the provider compliant with the Fair Credit Reporting Act (FCRA), which is related to employment law? - Is the provider accredited by the Professional Background Screening Association (PBSA)?	
3.12 Required Background Check for Workers The Organization requires background checks to be carried out by an external provider every three to five years (3-5) for all Employees, regardless of access to and/or control of Children. Positions and circumstances may require different levels of background checks. The Organization requires background checks for all Adult Volunteers that work directly with Children every three to five (3-5) years. All Workers subject to a background check must complete an authorization form that is legally compliant.	*See Indicator 1.6* All Workers need to be screened, regardless of age (See Indicator 3.1). Screening could involve application, interview, reference checks, etc. However, only Employees and Adult Volunteers are required to have a background check. Organizations should consult their background check provider for more information. - One approach is for the Organization to implement a multi-level background check system based on a risk assessment for different roles. Depending on the level of the background check, the system may include a national background check, local county background check, Child Protective Services (depending on state law), and sex offender registry look-up. Background checks may be required under state law as well. Background checks can also be evaluated for span of time checked (e.g., a decade or longer). - The Organization may ensure that the authorization form reflects consent for the scope of anticipated background check information (e.g., criminal background check only, criminal background plus reference checks). - The Organization may include a section of its policies stating that a	Policies require background checks for all Workers, except Child Workers, every three to five years. Background checks are documented with date, time, and retained in Worker files. Legally compliant background check authorization forms are documented. Examples of background checks and authorization forms are documented. Background check renewal is included in training materials.

INDICATORS	COMMENTS	EXAMPLES OF EVIDENCE
	credit history check should be considered appropriate only for positions involving financial responsibilities. ● Note that the federal Fair Credit Reporting Act (FCRA) may apply to employment-related checks and specifically to potential adverse action. Background checks may cover a broad range of personal information including criminal history, character, reputation, mode of living, and related creditworthiness aspects.	
(**3.13** Reserved for Future Use)		

Negative History

The Organization must take added measures to ensure that those with access to Children do not have a known history for certain types of unlawful activity; for example, assault, abuse, or sexual offenses. In addition, if an unlawful act does not fall within strict disqualification thresholds, the Organization should have clear protocols for how to further assess the candidate for eligibility.

INDICATORS	COMMENTS	EXAMPLES OF EVIDENCE
3.14 Negative Screening Results Evaluation and Response The Organization maintains thresholds for disqualifying candidates who have negative screening results from working with Children. Negative screening results may be based on prior immoral or unlawful acts. The Organization maintains policies and procedures for evaluating screening results based on the circumstances. The	*See Indicator 4.14* Potential "red flags" to be followed with further questions: ● Inaccurate, incomplete information or gaps in employment or Volunteer history; ● Unstable work history (short duration/abrupt departure/multiple states); ● Vague or evasive answers to questions; ● Volunteer/work history that has centered on a certain age and/or gender of Children. The Organization may decide that the following criminal convictions or established actions (may vary depending on jurisdiction) be considered as automatically disqualifying: ● Child abuse, sexual or otherwise; ● Abduction, murder, or manslaughter;	Policies and procedures to evaluate application/screening results are maintained. Automatic disqualifiers and offenses that require further evaluation are defined.

INDICATORS	COMMENTS	EXAMPLES OF EVIDENCE
Organization should distinguish between automatic disqualifiers and offenses that require further evaluation. The Organization may conduct a follow-up interview based on any possible "red flags" or problem areas identified in application, reference checks, or initial interview.	● Incest; ● Sexual assault; ● Any offense listed as disqualifying in the legal jurisdiction; and ● Pornography use. The Organization may decide that the following criteria be included when evaluating someone's history and suitability for working with Children. ● The relevance of the conviction(s) or history to the duties and responsibilities of working with Children; ● The candidate's subsequent employment history or other work information; ● Surrounding circumstances; ● Age of conviction(s) or other immoral or unlawful acts; ● Length of time since such activity occurred; ● Whether there are multiple indicators that point to an ongoing pattern of behavior; ● Evidence of repentance and rehabilitation; ● Evaluation of current spiritual fitness; and ● Any other mitigating circumstances.	
3.15 Sex Offender Prohibition Policies do not allow convicted sex offenders to work with Children. If the Organization allows convicted sex offenders to attend the Organization's programs or otherwise work or Volunteer within the Organization, then the Organization has a detailed policy	*See article ["Successful Church Assimilation of Sex Offenders"](#) for suggested best practices in allowing sex offenders to have access to an Organization's activities.* *As explained in this Resource, the Organization should have clearly written policies. The offender's agreement should prevent a sex offender from participation in in-person worship services or other activities and ministries, outside of restrictive guidelines that would often include a chaperone/accountability partner. The Organization also needs to consider whether it has the capacity to*	Policies prohibit sex offenders from working with Children. Policies state whether or not sex offenders are allowed to attend programming. If sex offenders are allowed to attend programming, policies provide restrictions concerning contact with Children, and guidelines concerning monitoring by another Adult (including restroom policies).

INDICATORS	COMMENTS	EXAMPLES OF EVIDENCE
providing strict restrictions and expressly prohibiting any contact or other interaction with Children.	*minster to sex offenders while keeping all Children safe, and it should likely seek legal and other counsel for such determination.*	

Standard 4: Training

The Organization shall provide training for all Workers who work with Children, as well as general ministry program participants. This training shall comply with state laws, regulations, and minimum requirements, as well as offer guidelines for reporting and responding to Child safety violations. Workers who work directly with Children shall be trained on appropriate limits and controls for any contact with Children outside of ministry activities.

Indicators & Comments

Child Abuse Training for All Workers

Studies show the negative impact of abuse and Child Neglect on Child development. Children who experience abuse suffer the effects physically, emotionally, socially, academically, and spiritually. They are more likely to suffer from anxiety and depression and struggle to develop healthy relationships. It is critical that the Organization provides training to equip all Workers to understand how to protect the safety of all Children. Workers must be properly trained to recognize abuse (causes, signs, and symptoms of abuse), and their legal and moral duty to report known or suspected Child Abuse.

INDICATORS	COMMENTS	EXAMPLES OF EVIDENCE
4.1 Required Worker Training and Conduct The Organization maintains a written policy for required training for Workers before having access to Children. Policies clearly define Code of Conduct and appropriate Worker behaviors related to Child safety. Policies also indicate consequences for violating the Code of Conduct. The Organization's training materials emphasize the importance of being proactive with Child safety as opposed to reactive. The Organization provides guidelines	*See [ECAP Youth and Children's Worker Code of Conduct](#) acknowledgement form.* Consequences for violating the Code of Conduct could include anything from verbal or written warning to termination.	Policies prohibit potential Workers' access to Children (while in the Organization's custody) until required training is completed. Worker Code of Conduct. Documented acknowledgement of Code of Conduct and procedures for violations of safety policies. Training materials include consequences of breaking the Code of Conduct. Training materials emphasize the importance of proactive Child Safety.

INDICATORS	COMMENTS	EXAMPLES OF EVIDENCE
on how to address a violation of Child safety policies and procedures.		
4.2 Trainer Qualifications and Training Schedule The Organization's training protocol provides for training on this training standard (see below indicators) from a qualified trainer to all Workers with access to Children. The Organization maintains a schedule of mandatory training for all Workers surrounding Child Abuse, including first-time training and periodic refresher training. The Organization documents training attendance, and ensures that Workers are made aware of handbooks and policies.	This indicator includes age-appropriate training for Child Workers. Training may take place in person or by multimedia/video. The Organization may require that first-time training covers the following: Child abuse awareness, definitions of abuse, physical and behavioral indicators, legal requirements under state statutes, reporting and response, how to identify areas of risk, mitigating risk, protection protocols, and documentation requirements. Refresher training might cover similar topics but go into more depth on particular areas. Suggested Best Practices: ● The Organization may require those seeking to work with Children to shadow a seasoned leader for a period of time before serving fully. ● The Organization may require that failure to meet mandatory training requirements will disqualify Workers from working with Children.	Training materials cover the topics listed. Trainer is qualified. Mandatory Child Abuse Training is regularly scheduled. Documentation of training attendance. Workers are aware of handbooks and policies.
4.3 Training on Signs of Abuse The Organization's training protocol includes causes, signs, symptoms, and effects on victims (psychological, behavioral, and environmental), including accompanying	Victims of abuse often suffer from these and other issues: an inability to trust, affecting relationships; feelings of guilt, anger, and low self-esteem; a tendency toward alcohol and drug abuse; eating disorders; and suicidal thoughts, attempts, and suicide risk. *See ECAP's Definitions for different types of abuse* Suggested Best Practice:	Training materials include causes, signs, symptoms, and effects of Child abuse, with written policy guidance. Training materials include physical and behavioral signs that could be indicators of abuse. If these things are observed, training materials include response guidelines.

INDICATORS	COMMENTS	EXAMPLES OF EVIDENCE
written policy guidance on Child abuse (sexual, physical, emotional, neglect). The Organization's training protocol includes physical and behavioral signs that could be indicators of abuse (or of other problems the Child is experiencing) and how to respond, including accompanying written policy guidance.	The Organization may consider health and safety training and mental health training for its Workers, particularly related to suicide ideation.	
4.4 Training on Child Abuse Reporting The Organization's training protocol includes Child abuse reporting and the consequences for failing to report. The Organization identifies the Child Safety Coordinator, and trains Workers on the role of the Child Safety Coordinator in reporting abuse.	*See ECAP Standard #5 on Response* Training and policies on Child abuse reporting may include: ● How to obtain an appropriate but minimal amount of information from a Child; ● How to ensure a Child's immediate safety; ● Grooming techniques towards Children and caregivers; ● Legal requirements regarding Mandatory Reporting and any doctrinal position on clergy confidentiality; ● Reporting process for external reporting and internal reporting within the Organization; ● Timeline for filing the report; ● How to document any reports filed; ● System of confidential record-keeping regarding Child abuse reporting; ● How to file a report (names and numbers); and ● Cooperation with law enforcement. The allocation of responsibility may vary if the alleged offender is one of the persons on the Child Safety Team or	Training materials include guidelines on Child Abuse reporting, including the consequences for failing to report. Training materials identify the organization's Child Safety Coordinator and explains the role of the Child Safety Coordinator.

INDICATORS	COMMENTS	EXAMPLES OF EVIDENCE
	within leadership. Such responsibility would be in addition to any Mandatory Reporter obligations that may be owed by individuals to report to government child welfare agencies. ● Notification may occur through training, postings in public and visible locations in the Organization, website information, and the distribution of the Organization's abuse prevention policy. ● Methods of reporting may vary and may include the following: a verbal report to the Child Safety Coordinator, any other trained adult, an online report, access to a hotline or toll-free number, or a receptacle to receive written reports.	
4.5 Zero Tolerance Policy and Training The Organization's training protocol includes a Zero Tolerance policy for Child Sexual Abuse. The Organization will terminate any Worker who is a Child Sexual Abuse offender who has admitted to, had a finding of, or been convicted of Child Sexual Abuse. The Organization's training protocol includes disciplinary action/responses for violations, whether for sexual abuse, other types of abuse, or other harm to a Child, with accompanying written policy guidance.	*See Indicator 1.9 and 3.15* Every Worker at the Organization signs a Child Safety Code of Conduct or annual disclosure that acknowledges termination for a violation of the Child safety policy, and that future prospective Employers and other organizations where a person may serve may be advised of such reason for termination. Disciplinary consequences for violations not involving Child Sexual Abuse are at the Organization's discretion. Discipline for repeat violations could be progressive, such as starting with training/coaching, verbal reprimands, written reprimands, suspension, termination, or combinations of the above – and all documented in Personnel and Volunteer files.	Training materials include a Zero Tolerance policy regarding Child Sexual Abuse. Training materials include disciplinary action for violations of the Organization's Code of Conduct.

INDICATORS	COMMENTS	EXAMPLES OF EVIDENCE
4.6 "No Right to Privacy" Training The Organization's training protocol includes awareness that Workers have no right of privacy or confidentiality regarding their own violations of Child safety protocols, and that the Organization may report this to members, donors, other employers, or other organizations where the violator may serve.	"No right to privacy" policy language may be put in writing in employment and Volunteer handbooks and may be acknowledged by the Worker agreements. Such policy language may include mention of computers, servers, and physical premises such as offices and workspace. (Such lack of privacy is distinctly different from confidentiality concerns involving alleged victims and perpetrators.)	Training materials include "No Right to Privacy" language regarding their violations of Child safety protocols.
4.7 Ethical Training The Organization's training protocol addresses ethical considerations as well as legal compliance. The Organization's training protocol addresses the danger of rationalizing or otherwise excusing unethical behavior. The Organization's training protocol includes biblical sexual ethics.	Ethical considerations are broader in scope than any particular indicator as identified through ECAP standards, with a transcending overall importance beyond mere surface compliance with specified accreditation standards. The word "ethics," as used in this Standard, refers to the moral principles that govern a person's behavior or activities. The Organization may require that its training materials encompass questionable situations that may go beyond specific prohibitions (e.g., no touching genital areas) to broader ethics-and-Bible-based principles (e.g., avoid temptation, and treat persons with respect). The Organization may require that its training materials define sexuality and the nature of sexual sin from a biblical perspective. Such language would exist not only to communicate basic standards of ethical behavior but to build strong Christian character.	Training materials include ethical considerations, legal compliance, the danger of rationalizing unethical behavior, and biblical sexual ethics.
4.8 Health and Hygiene Training	*See Indicator 2.3 for policy requirements*	Training materials include adequate health and hygiene safety.

INDICATORS	COMMENTS	EXAMPLES OF EVIDENCE
The Organization's training protocol includes health and hygiene training.		
4.9 Visitor Identification & Procedures Training The Organization's training protocol includes training to all Workers on access control, and visitor identification procedures.	Suggested Best Practice: Training may include: ● How visitors should be identified, such as with visitor badges; ● What to do when staff see someone without identification (e.g., stop them, then escort them or ask someone else to escort them to the identified location for visitor check-in); ● Unauthorized visitors are not allowed to be in contact with Children.	Training material includes access control and visitor protocols. Staff and volunteers are able to articulate access control and visitor protocols.
4.10 Information Sharing Training The Organization's training protocol addresses sharing information internally or externally (apart from and in addition to any mandatory reporting) that may be confidential, private, defamatory, or otherwise harmful. This includes legal duties and appropriate communications for the Organization and its leaders, Employees, Volunteers, and members. The Organization gives particular attention to protecting the privacy of Children.	*See ECAP Standard #5, "Response" and ECAP Resource "Handling an Investigation."* Note: Defamation is a legal claim for untrue written or verbal factual statements that harm someone's reputation. There are defenses to defamation, such as that the information shared is true or constitutes only opinion. If the Organization or its representative could be accused of defaming someone, a legal analysis may be appropriate before any further information disclosure. Suggested Best Practices: When the privacy of a Child is involved it is important to keep the information confidential. Absent extenuating circumstances warranting a different approach, names of Children should be withheld.	Training materials address sharing information internally or externally that may be confidential, private, defamatory, or otherwise harmful, including legal duties and appropriate communications for the Organization, its leaders, Workers, and members. Training materials give particular attention to protecting the privacy of Children.
4.11 Extra-Ministry Contact Training	Suggested Best Practices:	Training materials include guidelines regarding contact with Children outside of regularly scheduled ministry programming.

INDICATORS	COMMENTS	EXAMPLES OF EVIDENCE
The Organization's training protocol includes interactions with Children outside of regularly scheduled ministry programming, with accompanying written policy guidance.	Extra-ministry contact should be edifying and honoring to the individual and the individual's parents. Workers are expected to follow the moral guidelines of the Code of Conduct, even outside of ministry programming. Individually meeting with Children is discouraged.	Workers are still required to follow the Code of Conduct outside of ministry programming.
4.12 Extra-Ministry Communication Training The Organization's training protocol addresses communication between Children and Workers outside of regularly scheduled ministry programming, with accompanying written policy guidance addressing social media contact, online engagement, electronic communication, and written communication.	Suggested Best Practices: Communication should be with parental permission, encouraging to the Child, honoring to the parents/guardians, and overall edifying. Social media contact or online engagement should be with groups or via text messaging platforms. Individual messaging or texting is discouraged. In the event of emergency communications, the Worker's supervisor should be notified, and a copy of the communications may be requested.	Training materials include communication guidelines between Children and Workers, including social media contact, online engagement, electronic communication, and written communication.
4.13 Home Visitation Training The Organization's training protocol includes guidelines for home visitation.	Suggested Best Practice: Guidelines for home visitation with Children may include the following: ● At no time will the Worker show up at a home uninvited by the parents/guardians of that Child. ● At no time will a Worker be alone with a Child in the home. If Parents must leave for any reason while a Worker is there, then the Worker will leave also. ● If staying at the Child's home or on a trip, no overnight stays with a Child in the same room will be allowed.	Training materials include guidelines for home visitation.

INDICATORS	COMMENTS	EXAMPLES OF EVIDENCE
	● Adults will not shower or change clothes in front of a Child. ● Adults will have no one-on-one time with a Child unless in situations visible to others.	

Specialized Training

While basic safety training should be required for all Workers who are part of an Organization, some training should be specified for particular roles within the Organization. Those responsible for screening Workers should receive additional training on processing applications and interviews. Additionally, the Child Safety Coordinator should receive additional training on their role in the organization as the one responsible for Child Safety and reporting.

INDICATORS	COMMENTS	EXAMPLES OF EVIDENCE
4.14 Screener Training The Organization provides training to those responsible for handling applications, screening, and interviews. The Organization trains Personnel to identify "red flag" behaviors, patterns, and characteristics of potential Perpetrators using Advanced Screening Techniques.	Screener training may include instructions for processing applications and background checks, verifying references and work history, conducting interviews, and evaluating results. *Note: ECAP Youth and Children's Worker Screening Questionnaire Resource* *See Standard 3 for more information* See ECAP's "Definitions" for *Advanced Screening Techniques*	Training requirements for screeners are documented. Records of individual screener training materials are kept. The Organization's screener training materials include "red flags."

Safe and Secure Orientation for Children

Children are often naïve, making them highly vulnerable to the Sexual Abuse grooming and isolation process. Training Children in abuse prevention is critical. Age-appropriate training equips Children with key action steps on recognizing, resisting, and reporting inappropriate situations they may face. Such training can prevent abuse from occurring and encourage offenders to abandon pursuing that Organization. It can decrease the amount of time between attempted abuse and the reporting of it. It is also valuable to train parents so that they can support and coach their Children.

INDICATORS	COMMENTS	EXAMPLES OF EVIDENCE
4.15 Safe-and-Secure Training for Children The Organization uses age-appropriate safe-and-secure training for Children and their parents that includes principles of abuse prevention.	● Recognize: How to recognize when an interaction is inappropriate or uncomfortable. ● Resist: How to resist by using verbal or non-verbal means to remove themselves from the situation. ● Report: How and to whom to report inappropriate and uncomfortable situations, within the Organization or externally.	Safe-and-Secure Training for parents and children is in place.
4.16 Safe Environment Training The Organization addresses boundaries critical to creating a safe environment with Parents and Children.	Suggested Best Practice: The Organization may require parameters to be established within its policies regarding appropriate communication between peers and for adults to Children. The Organization may include the following language in its policies: *Children should not engage in cursing, vulgarity, bullying, sexual innuendo, or sexual comments. Children should be aware that adults should not comment on their bodies or make overly personal comments on personal appearance.* Safe Environment Training could include topics and parameters such as: ● Modesty: Identify appropriate expectations for sports or swimming attire and dress codes. ● One-on-Ones: Specify rules to prevent adults from being alone unsupervised with a Child not related to them. ● Determine the parameters for approved and unapproved peer-to-peer or adult-to-Child touching (see above Section "Child Abuse Training" – *Indicator 4.3*). ● Determine the parameters for approved and unapproved communication between Child peers or adult-to-Child. ● Establish "No Bullying" language to address any behavior that involves physical, verbal, cyber, or relational mistreatment or coercion in any form.	Training materials include safe environment training.

INDICATORS	COMMENTS	EXAMPLES OF EVIDENCE
	● Train Children to understand that their body is their personal space, and no one has the right to invade their personal space with inappropriate actions.	

Standard 5: Response

The Organization shall have written policies and procedures that specify methods and timing for reporting abuse allegations. The Organization shall also have a full incident response plan including a list of notifications and contacts.

Indicators & Comments

Incident Response Plan

Organizations that serve Children must be prepared to respond to allegations of abuse, whether they stem from outside (external) the Organization or within (internal). An incident response plan, which identifies roles and responsibilities of the response team, enables the Organization to respond quickly, with accuracy, and with optimal care.

INDICATORS	COMMENTS	EXAMPLES OF EVIDENCE
5.1 Written Response Plan The Organization's Response Plan is written and addresses the following: How to keep Children safe; ● How to receive a disclosure or other allegation of abuse from a Child; ● How to report abuse; ● Identification of mandatory reporter laws; ● Reporting protocols including numbers for jurisdictional agencies and documentation policies; ● Contact information for legal counsel and insurance carrier; ● Designated counselors or therapist	*See Indicator 4.4* *See ECAP Resource "Building a Response Plan"*	A written Response Plan that meets all requirements.

INDICATORS	COMMENTS	EXAMPLES OF EVIDENCE
5.2 Crisis Response Team The Organization identifies a crisis response team who is prepared to respond in the event of an incident, and outlines the roles and responsibilities of the team.	Suggested Best Practice: The Crisis Response Team should be comprised of at least three unrelated individuals including both male and female as well as the Child Safety Coordinator. Internal roles and responsibilities of a crisis management team may include: ● Advocacy member to relate directly with the Victims and families impacted by the crisis; ● Executive leader to coordinate all internal and external efforts of the team; ● Project manager to support the team through administrative efforts to organize, track, and report information; ● Child Safety Coordinator ● Communications spokesperson ● Legal counsel Alternate response team members should be identified, in case a response team member has a conflict of interest with someone under investigation or an alleged victim. The Organization may require maintaining an attorney-client relationship with knowledgeable and experienced legal counsel, to advise as needed on Mandatory Reporter obligations, scope and applicability of clergy privilege, safety of the Victim and/or Accused, employment matters, internal communications, media relations, and other publicity considerations.	Crisis Response Team is identified. Members of the Crisis Response Team understand their role and responsibilities.
5.3 Communications Guidelines The Organization's Response Plan identifies how to handle internal and external communications for	Suggested Best Practice: Organization designates a Communications Spokesperson to handle all communications with claimants, claimants' counsel and media outlets. The Organization's Board is responsible for determining a suitable communication	Response Plan identifies how to handle internal and external communications.

INDICATORS	COMMENTS	EXAMPLES OF EVIDENCE
the Organization's members, regular attenders, stakeholders, the general public, on a "need to know" messaging and distribution basis, and working with the Organization's legal counsel as warranted.	representative. Such judgment should be based on a combination of experience, demonstrated skills and capability, and related training. In larger ministries and/or specific contexts, it may be appropriate to designate a team of designated communications representatives. For example, it may be appropriate for one person to act as the Organization's spokesperson for media outlets, and another person to act as the Organization's spokesperson with respect to a claimant and the claimant's legal counsel.	
5.4 Criminal/Civil Compliance Measures The Organization's Response Plan identifies compliance measures for potential criminal and civil investigations, including a written Records Retention policy, confidentiality protocols, protection of attorney-client privilege, and cooperation with authorities.	*See Indicator 1.6-1.8 regarding Record Retention*	The Organization's Response Plan identifies compliance measures for potential criminal and civil investigations, including Records Retention policy, confidentiality protocols, protection of attorney-client privilege, and cooperation with authorities.

Receiving and Making Reports

Providing multiple ways to report disclosures, allegations, or other suspicions encourages people to report who may be reluctant. However, all reports should be funneled to the Child Safety Coordinator or other designated person, which will ensure that the Organization becomes aware of multiple reports against the same alleged offender. It also helps to ensure that the proper response process is carried out effectively.

Additionally, most jurisdictions have mandatory reporting laws in regard to Child Abuse. Failure to report to law enforcement or Child Protective Services may constitute a civil or criminal offense. Mandatory reporting laws require certain categories of persons to report Child abuse or neglect to authorities within a limited period after receiving information that abuse has occurred (e.g., "reasonable suspicion" or other reporting thresholds, per applicable state law). The laws vary considerably by jurisdiction with respect to persons covered, time for reporting, and definitions.

INDICATORS	COMMENTS	EXAMPLES OF EVIDENCE
5.5 Investigation-Related Measures The Organization's Response Plan identifies investigation-related measures such as confidentiality protocols, protection of attorney-client privilege, and cooperation with authorities.	Suggested Best Practice: The Organization may require that if further information is needed from the Child, it must be obtained carefully and on a limited basis to determine if reasonable suspicion of Child abuse exists to report.	The Organization's protocols identify proper investigation-related measures.
5.6 Legal/Moral Reporting and Response Protocols The Organization identifies the legal duties of its Governing Board members and Workers to report suspected abuse, as Mandatory Reporters. The Organization clearly defines the differences between Mandatory Reporting and non-mandatory, moral/ethical reporting, and clearly provides for both, based on additional spiritual, moral, and ethical concerns.	Some jurisdictions impose a duty to report Child abuse on everyone, while in other jurisdictions only certain classes of persons are Mandatory Reporters (e.g., childcare providers, healthcare workers, teachers, etc.). Some reports may need to be made outside of jurisdiction, even internationally, or they may need to be made to licensing boards or other entities. Not everyone is a Mandatory Reporter. While only Mandatory Reporters are legally obligated, individuals may report suspected or known Child Abuse to government authorities. Failure to report by a Mandatory Reporter may give rise to criminal and civil penalties for Organization's Personnel. This can be the case even if reports are made but not promptly. In some cases, a report is not mandatory in the jurisdiction because the Victim is now an adult. For criminal allegations involving Victims who are now adults, a report may still be appropriate. The Organization may take steps to ensure that Workers are aware that since the majority of abuse takes place in the home,	Legal duties of Governing Board members, and Workers to support suspected abuse are documented. Mandatory and non-mandatory ethical reporting requirements are outlined in policies.

INDICATORS	COMMENTS	EXAMPLES OF EVIDENCE
	they may need to report intra-family abuse or neglect. Suggested Best Practice: Organizations may consider adopting a policy of reporting even if someone is not a Mandatory Reporter.	
5.7 Child Safety Coordinator Reporting and Mandatory Reporting The Organization requires the Child Safety Coordinator to support reporting all instances of suspected abuse to the appropriate authorities, either making or assisting to make such reports, and consulting with legal counsel if needed. The Response Plan makes clear that an individual Mandatory Reporter will still have independent reporting responsibilities.		The Child Safety Coordinator proactively encourages reporting of suspected abuse. Response Plan clarifies Mandatory Reporting responsibilities.

Notifications

The Organizational Response Plan should determine who should make notifications, and when notifications should be made, taking into consideration the privacy and confidentiality regarding sensitive information and details of Victims and alleged offenders. Appropriate notifications should be documented or noted in incident reporting and may include the Crisis Response Team, leadership, Board, Victim's Parent(s), and other stakeholders.

INDICATORS	COMMENTS	EXAMPLES OF EVIDENCE
5.8 Parent Notifications The Incident Response Plan identifies how to address notifying the alleged Victim's Parent(s) if the Victim is a Child.	*See ECAP's Definition of "Parent"* Organizations should keep in mind that the person who needs to be notified is the Parent or guardian of the Child with legal custody. Organizations should be aware of potential custody disputes in the case of divorce or other situations.	The Response Plan identifies how to address notifying the alleged Victim's Parent(s) if the Victim is a Child.
5.9 Leadership Notifications The Organization's Response Plan identifies how to handle notifications within the Organization, including members, Board, and other stakeholders.	Suggested Best Practices: The Organization may require that communications with the Organization's members and other stakeholders should generally be made on a "need to know" basis, per legal advice. This may include a summary of the initial report and updates.	The Organization's Response Plan identifies how to handle notifications within the Organization, including members, Board, and other stakeholders.
5.10 Insurance Notification Policy The Organization's Response Plan provides for timely, formal, and verifiable notification to its insurance provider of an abuse incident, legal claim or threat of litigation. The Response Plan should specify the individual or role of the staff person responsible to notify.	*See ECAP Resource "Building a Response Plan."* Refer to insurance policy on which types of abuse are to be reported (e.g. internal or external) The Organization may require its Response Plan to identify insurance protocols, including ready access to insurance representatives and understanding of insurance coverage (including legal defense, Worker practices liability, coverage for Volunteers, directors' and officers' liability [D&O], and sexual misconduct). It is recommended that the Organization be prepared to cooperate fully with the insurance carrier in handling any claims. In the event of a claim, the Organization's legal representation to defend such a claim may be provided or otherwise approved by the insurance carrier, as requested by the Organization or designated by the insurance carrier. It is	The Organization's Response Plan provides for timely, formal, and verifiable notification to its insurance provider of any abuse incident, legal claim or threat of litigation.

INDICATORS	COMMENTS	EXAMPLES OF EVIDENCE
	recommended that care be taken to protect attorney-client privilege throughout all insurance coverage processes. Organization may require that its Employees refrain from making settlement offers to claimants without getting authorization from its insurance carrier, as such settlements may not be honored and may affect insurance coverage. Organizations have a contractual obligation to report suspected losses to their insurance provider within a reasonable period of time or risk the possibility of a denial of coverage. In addition to covering potential settlement demands, insurance may also provide the Organization with additional covered services such as legal, media assistance, and communication response. It is likely necessary to appoint someone responsible to contact the insurance company in the Response Plan.	

Organizational Investigation

The Organization may need to sponsor an investigation, perhaps in consultation with an attorney knowledgeable in Child abuse and such investigations. Such investigation is apart from or in addition to any investigation carried out by law enforcement or Child Protective Services, and could be needed when such government investigation does not happen or presents an insufficient result for the Organization's need. An Organization's investigation may be of varying scope and extent, internally carried out, or possibly referred to an independent investigation. The following Indicators address such matters on a preliminary basis, for purposes of the Organization's accreditation process. Additional guidance regarding investigations is contained in the ECAP Resource "Handling an Investigation."

INDICATORS	COMMENTS	EXAMPLES OF EVIDENCE
5.11 Government Investigation Protocol The Organization's policy recognizes the potential for and prioritizes the investigation from	It is recommended that the Organization work with law enforcement or CPS if needed at any point in the investigative process, usually upon advice from their legal counsel.	Policies and protocols provide for outside investigations. These make clear that an outside investigation takes priority over an internal investigation.

INDICATORS	COMMENTS	EXAMPLES OF EVIDENCE
law enforcement or Child Protective Services.		
5.12 Organization Investigation Protocol The Organization's policy addresses specific parameters for its own investigation, whether internal or independent, including care for Victims, addressing offenders, mitigating risk, and developing written reports for all investigations.	*See ECAP Resource:"Handling an Investigation" for additional detail.* The investigation's goals may include the following: follow facts objectively and avoid bias; create no further emotional harm; protect possible Victims; provide justice and due process for possible offenders; avoid legal liability for the Organization; and make findings to a preponderance of the evidence. The assistance of experts, such as professional investigators, Victim assistance experts, Child forensic interviewers or forensic psychologists, may also be warranted. Results of the investigation may be documented in writing and presented to the Organization's Board to make final determinations about next steps, disciplinary action, and areas for improvement.	Policies and protocols provide for internal and independent investigations. These include care for Victims, addressing offenders, mitigating risk, and developing written reports.

Clergy Privilege [Church Only]

Clergy are Mandatory Reporters in almost all jurisdictions, with some statutory exceptions for the confessional or clergy-penitent privilege. Jurisdictions vary considerably in how they treat the clergy-penitent privilege in the context of mandatory reporting. Some jurisdictions abolish the privilege completely as applied to Child abuse, others restrict it only to sacramental confession like that practiced in more liturgical traditions such as Roman Catholicism and Eastern Orthodoxy, and some have a broader exception.

INDICATORS	COMMENTS	EXAMPLES OF EVIDENCE
5.13 Policy & Doctrinal Definition of Clergy-Penitent Privilege and Confidentiality If the Organization is a church, it defines its	The Organization addresses confessional or clergy-penitent confidentiality, including any applicable doctrinal statements, whether applicable law provides any relevant exemptions to reporting requirements for clergy, the importance of consulting with legal	Only applicable for churches Clergy-penitent privilege is defined in doctrinal statements and policy. Clergy-penitent privilege is in accordance with local and state laws.

INDICATORS	COMMENTS	EXAMPLES OF EVIDENCE
confessional or clergy-penitent privilege doctrinally and in policy so that both clergy and those confiding understand the limits of confidentiality. The Organization should determine jurisdictional applicability of clergy-penitent privilege and any possible Child Abuse reporting requirements.	counsel for specific situations, and appropriate steps for clergy who are bound by confidentiality laws to encourage confessing offenders to self-report to authorities or to encourage Victims to disclose. Note that confidentiality may not apply if a third non-clergy person is present during a communication (e.g., an elder or deacon). Confer with legal counsel regarding specific situations. A helpful resource is *Christianity Today*'s Church Law & Tax guide on mandatory Child abuse reporting and clergy privilege. See https://www.churchlawandtax.com/web/50-state-child-abuse-reporting-laws/.	Limits of confidentiality are defined in doctrinal statements and policy.