

Working with children

If your organisation works with children in situations involving public programs, education events, performances, fun day activities or photographing them as part of the general visitorship you will need to complete the Working With Children Check.

A working with children check involves a national criminal search through CrimTrac. It investigates all criminal charges (whether or not they were heard), prior convictions and juvenile records. The process includes completing an online application form, proving your identity at an approved agency and paying the applicable fee. You can commence child-related work once you have been given your WWCC number. The process results in either an approval to work with children or a bar.

In July 2013 NSW brought in new Working With Children Check guidelines so even if you have completed a check previously it's important to make sure it's still current and meets the new criteria.

Children in the creative process

In addition to general interactions with children, there may be cases where children are involved with the creative projects. Both the Australian Government and ArtsLaw have information on their websites. It's essential to read up on this before embarking on a child-centred project.

Best Practices when working with children

Many cultural organisations set their own guidelines around behaviours with children. These may include minimising all types of physical contact and always having more than one adult present when assisting children to change into costumes or when administering First Aid.

Some organisations also establish practices where one adult is not left supervising a small group of children; though for many small and volunteer-run museums this is not practical. In these situations, awareness of best practice and legal responsibilities with children should form part of the training for guides and museum volunteers.

Some cultural institutions also set rules around storing images of children on their server (for example, children who participated in a museum education program). Often images are required to be immediately deleted and/or have access permissions set around them.

Many institutions see this as part of their Duty of Care and falls into the category of protecting children from harm. There are several resources online including the NSW Work and Safety and the Youth Action and Policy websites which address this aspect of working with children.



You might also like ...

School excursions and risk management

Museums & Galleries of NSW
www.mgnsw.org.au

Child Protection (Working With Children) Act

www.legislation.nsw.gov.au

Office of the Children's Guardian

www.kids.nsw.gov.au

Protocols for working with children in art

Australia Council
www.australiacouncil.gov.au

Children in the creative process

Arts Law
www.artslaw.com.au