



**Have fun  
and be  
safe**

**A guide to help parents and  
carers choose children's activities**

**NSPCC**   
Cruelty to children must stop. **FULL STOP.**

**There are so many activities to choose from in local communities and parents and carers want to encourage children and young people to participate. But how do you know if they're safe?**



## What should you check out?

A good organisation will welcome questions about their activities and the safety of their environment. All organisations should have a child protection policy; including a statement on, and guidelines about, keeping children safe.

**Are the staff and volunteers suitable to work with children?** All staff and volunteers should go through a proper recruitment process which includes interviews, references and police checks.

**Is there a written code of behaviour?** All organisations should have a written code of behaviour, which outlines good practice when working with children. An environment which allows oppressive behaviour such as bullying, shouting, racism and sexism is not acceptable.

**How does the organisation manage staff and volunteers?** There should be someone in charge who supervises staff and volunteers and is able to act appropriately if there are concerns about a child.

**Do they offer regular training to staff and volunteers?** Apart from skills training, all workers should have training in child protection and health and safety.

**How can children and their parents or carers voice their concerns?** Organisations should tell you where to go and what to do if you or your child have any worries. If you are unhappy about the way your concern is dealt with, contact any of the organisations listed overleaf.

**How does the organisation provide for intimate care needs?** In the case of very young children, or those with a disability, you should check out routines for toileting, feeding and administering medication.

**Does the organisation have a health and safety policy?** Find out if there is a leader qualified in first aid; that there is a first aid box; and that the premises have passed fire regulations.

**What are the arrangements when children go on outings?** You should be informed of arrangements – including transport to and from – for every outing no matter how long or short, and your consent should be requested.

**Does the organisation have an internet safety policy?** If the organisation allows children to access the internet, find out what guidelines or filtering software they have in place for safe surfing.



## What should you be wary of?

- Activities where parents are discouraged from staying to watch or become involved.
- Behaviour or activities that encourage rough play, sexual innuendo or humiliating punishments.
- Individuals who take charge and operate independently of organisational guidelines.
- Individuals who show favouritism or personally reward specific children.
- Encouragement of inappropriate physical contact.
- Poor communication and lack of parental involvement, leaving you feeling uneasy.
- Children who drop out or stop going for no apparent reason.
- Invitations for children to spend time alone with staff or volunteers (or even to visit their home).

**Remember: listen to your children and ask questions about the activities they take part in.**

## **Organisations have a responsibility to be open and welcoming and to share information about themselves and their activities**

Daycare activities, such as pre-school playgroups and crèches, are required to register with their local authority. But are you aware that not all organisations providing supervised activities – such as uniformed organisations, sports clubs and youth groups - are required to register? Yet they still have a responsibility to provide a safe environment for your child.

Many activities are supported by volunteers who generously give their time to provide regular activities for your child. However, whether or not workers are paid, you should expect the same standards from all organisations.



# How should you share your concerns?

You may feel reluctant to voice your concerns in case you are wrong or worried about the impact on your child, but if you are concerned you **must** take action.

- Speak to other parents.
- Speak to the leader in charge.
- If you are not confident that they are the appropriate person, speak to someone in a higher position of authority.
- If you are unhappy about the response you receive, please contact one of the organisations below.
- If you have a serious concern about a child at risk of abuse, please contact the NSPCC Child Protection Helpline, or your local social services department or the police.

## NSPCC Helpline

If you have serious concerns about a child, please call the NSPCC Child Protection Helpline; a free 24-hour service which provides counselling, information and advice, to anyone concerned about a child at risk of abuse.

**NSPCC**   
**CHILD PROTECTION  
HELPLINE**  
**0808 800 5000**

## Kidscape

2 Grosvenor Gardens, London SW1W 0DH  
Helpline: 08451 205 204 Website: [www.kidscape.org.uk](http://www.kidscape.org.uk)

Provides information for parents on bullying and keeping children safe. (Send a large stamped self-addressed envelope). They also operate a bullying helpline for parents, Monday to Friday, 10am-4pm.

## 4children

City Reach, 5 Greenwich View Place, London E14 9NN  
Tel: 020 7512 2112 Website: [www.4children.org.uk](http://www.4children.org.uk)

Promotes before-school, after-school and holiday kids' clubs for five-12 year olds throughout the UK, and provides free advice on how to set them up.

## Parents Online

Website: [www.parentscentre.gov.uk](http://www.parentscentre.gov.uk)

Parents Online has been created by the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) to advise parents on safe internet use and other parenting issues.

## Parentline Plus

Unit 520 Highgate Studios, 53-79 Highgate Rd,  
Kentish Town, London NW5 1TL  
Helpline: 0808 800 2222 Textphone: 0800 783 6783  
Website: [www.parentlineplus.org.uk](http://www.parentlineplus.org.uk)

Parentline is the free confidential helpline run by Parentline Plus for anyone in a parenting role, including step-parents and those experiencing family change.

## NSPCC

Weston House, 42 Curtain Road, London EC2A 3NH  
Tel: 020 7825 2500 Website: [www.nspcc.org.uk](http://www.nspcc.org.uk)

The NSPCC offers a wide range of leaflets and booklets for parents and carers. For a parenting pack please send an A4 SAE (with £1.50 in stamps) to: NSPCC Publications, Weston House, 42 Curtain Rd, London EC2A 3NH. You can also view these publications online at: [www.nspcc.org.uk/parenting](http://www.nspcc.org.uk/parenting)