



# Webinar: A Critical Conversation on Early Childhood Safety

Thank you for showing up.

Your presence matters. Whether you came as an educator, a parent, a survivor, a policymaker, or someone who simply cares, you are part of a growing national voice demanding that childcare safety be real, not just regulatory theatre.

This tip sheet is for you. To help you take action, feel supported, and stay informed.

## 1. Take Care of Yourself

The conversations we had - and will continue to have - are heavy. If you were triggered, overwhelmed, or emotionally drained by the content:

Acknowledge your limits.

You are allowed to log off, rest, or disengage temporarily. There is no shame in protecting your energy. Pause. Breathe. Reach out.

You are not alone. Please seek professional support if needed.

We recommend:

1800RESPECT (24/7) – 1800 737 732

Blue Knot Foundation – 1300 657 380

Lifeline – 13 11 14

## **2. Educators: Know Your Rights & Responsibilities**

- You have the right to say, “This isn’t safe.” Whether that’s being left alone in a room, being asked to ignore a red flag, or being discouraged from reporting concerns.
- You are not expected to carry trauma without support. If your Centre does not have an Employee Assistance Program (EAP), speak to your union or service manager about accessible mental health resources.
- Physical affection is not outlawed, but must be informed and safe. If you’re unsure, ask leadership to clarify policies and offer practical training. If they can’t, that’s the problem.

## **3. Parents & Carers: Ask the Uncomfortable Questions & have uncomfortable conversations with your kids**

You are allowed to ask for more than a tour and a brochure.

- Who has access to my child throughout the day?
- Are there ever moments of solitary supervision?
- What digital systems are used, and who can access the data?
- Is staff turnover high? Why?
- How are complaints or concerns handled - not in theory, but in real life?

If the answers are vague or defensive, trust your instincts. Ask again. Ask for better. Or look elsewhere.

We also need to start teaching our children about body safety, private parts and consent very early in life so that we can give them the language to speak up, and to know when something may not feel right.

There is now a wealth of resources out there to help you do this right from a very young age. Maggie Dent has a comprehensive list you can download, which her team regularly adds to. **[Download the list here](#)**

Maggie also recommends you particularly check out **[safe4kids.com.au](https://www.safe4kids.com.au)** as a starting point, and listen to her Parental As Anything episode on talking to kids about sex, bodies and consent, **[here](#)**.

#### 4. Digital Safety Starts With One Question: Who Owns the Image?

- **Educators:** Never use your personal device to photograph or record children - even for documentation. If that's expected of you, raise it formally.
- **Parents:** Don't repost or share centre photos without full understanding of how those images might be misused - by strangers, by platforms, by AI.
- **Directors:** Conduct a **digital safety audit**. Now. Your Centre's 2016 social media policy will not protect you in 2025.

#### 5. Everyone needs to be informed about child sexual abuse, how to recognise it and how to prevent it.

We all need to understand what child sexual abuse looks like, to know what signs to look out for that might indicate a child's being abused, and how we can advocate for our children and the children in our care.

Project Paradigm has an excellent resource on this, which parents and educators can refer to, and which Madeleine West (who is also a Project Paradigm ambassador) drew from in the webinar.

You can download the It's NEVER too early to talk about child sexual abuse prevention resource **here**.

#### 6. Family Day Care Deserves More Attention - Not Less

If you are seeking care or working in the sector, don't overlook Family Day Care:

- Small ratios
- Consistent, well-trained educators
- Deep community integration
- High visibility
- Fewer places for harm to hide

This model is working. Let's lift it, not ignore it.

#### 7. Get Involved - Without Burning Out

You don't have to do everything. But you can do something.

- Share the webinar recording **download here** with your community, colleagues, and MPs.
- Email your local member about the urgent reforms Ctrl+Shift is calling for.
- Join the Ctrl+Shift mailing list for upcoming forums, training, and policy submissions.
- Bring this conversation to your staff room, committee, or board meeting.
- Hold your service accountable - not with blame, but with backbone.

## **8. This Is Not the End. Stay Loud. Stay Human.**

The system wants you to forget what you heard. It will rely on the fatigue of frontline workers, the busyness of parents, and the denial of bureaucrats.

Don't let it.

Keep talking. Keep sharing. Keep asking: Is this really safe? Or does it just look safe on paper?

### **For Resources, Media, and Upcoming Action Points**

**Stay Tuned: Scroll to the bottom of the page & join the mailing list:**

<https://www.ctrlshft.global/contact-us>

Reach out if your workplace, service, or community group would like to host a Ctrl+Shift session.

We are not okay.

And neither are the children.

But that doesn't mean we do nothing. It means we do better.

Together.

The **Ctrl+Shft** Coalition -

Maggie Dent, Madeleine West, Kirra Pendergast and the 1,600+ people who joined the webinar.