

Media release

7 September 2026



Goodstart offers free help to ECEC providers to guide teachers and educators to understand and respond to children's sexual behaviours

As part of their normal development very young children can display sexual curiosity and behaviours. To mark National Child Protection Week, Goodstart Early Learning, the largest ECEC provider in Australia, is sharing a guide to responding to children's sexual Behaviour with other early learning centres, their teachers and educators.

The 'Responding to Children's Sexual Behaviour Framework' provides teachers and educators with practical, evidence-based guidance to recognise, interpret and respond appropriately to children's sexual behaviours.

This initiative highlights Goodstart's commitment to being a Child Safe organisation and to preventing, detecting and responding child abuse, neglect and harm.

The framework helps teachers and educators distinguish between developmentally typical sexual behaviours and behaviours that may be unsafe or harmful, supporting consistent and child-centred responses.

Goodstart Head of Safeguarding Sara Evans said teachers and educators are seeking greater guidance in this area.

"Teachers and Educators want more support to understand children's sexual behaviours, respond appropriately and confidently, and ensure every child is safe and supported," Ms Evans said.

"Children display sexual behaviours as part of normal development, but it can be difficult for teachers and educators to know when a behaviour may be a cause for concern. This framework provides practical, evidence-based guidance to help teams make those decisions."

The framework aligns with national safeguarding principles and draws on current research, expert consultation and best practice in child development and abuse prevention. It includes a continuum of children's sexual behaviours [adapted from the work of Amanda Paton and Leah Bromfield], examples of age-appropriate behaviours, practical guidance for educators, and recommended steps for teams.

"The guide is for teachers and educators working with children aged birth to six years and also includes resources and strategies centres might share with families for their use at home."



Media release (continued)

"Safeguarding children is everyone's responsibility. By sharing this framework with other early learning providers we're hoping to help teachers and educators respond consistently, confidently and in ways that support children's safety, wellbeing and healthy development," she said.

The **Responding to Children's Sexual Behaviour Framework** is available as a free download from the [Goodstart website](https://www.goodstart.org.au).



For more information

Contact 0429 553 103 or media@goodstart.org.au.

Notes for editors: Goodstart Early Learning is Australia's largest not for profit early learning provider with 654 centres nationwide committed to improving the lives of Australia's children and their families. Website: [goodstart.org.au](https://www.goodstart.org.au).

Acknowledgement of country

Goodstart acknowledges all Traditional Custodians across Australia and recognises First Nations peoples' continued cultural and spiritual connection to the land, sky and waterways that surround us. We pay our respects to Elders past, present and emerging.