

Child Protection Policy



“Protected. Respected. Empowered. – English Play Corner.”

November 2025

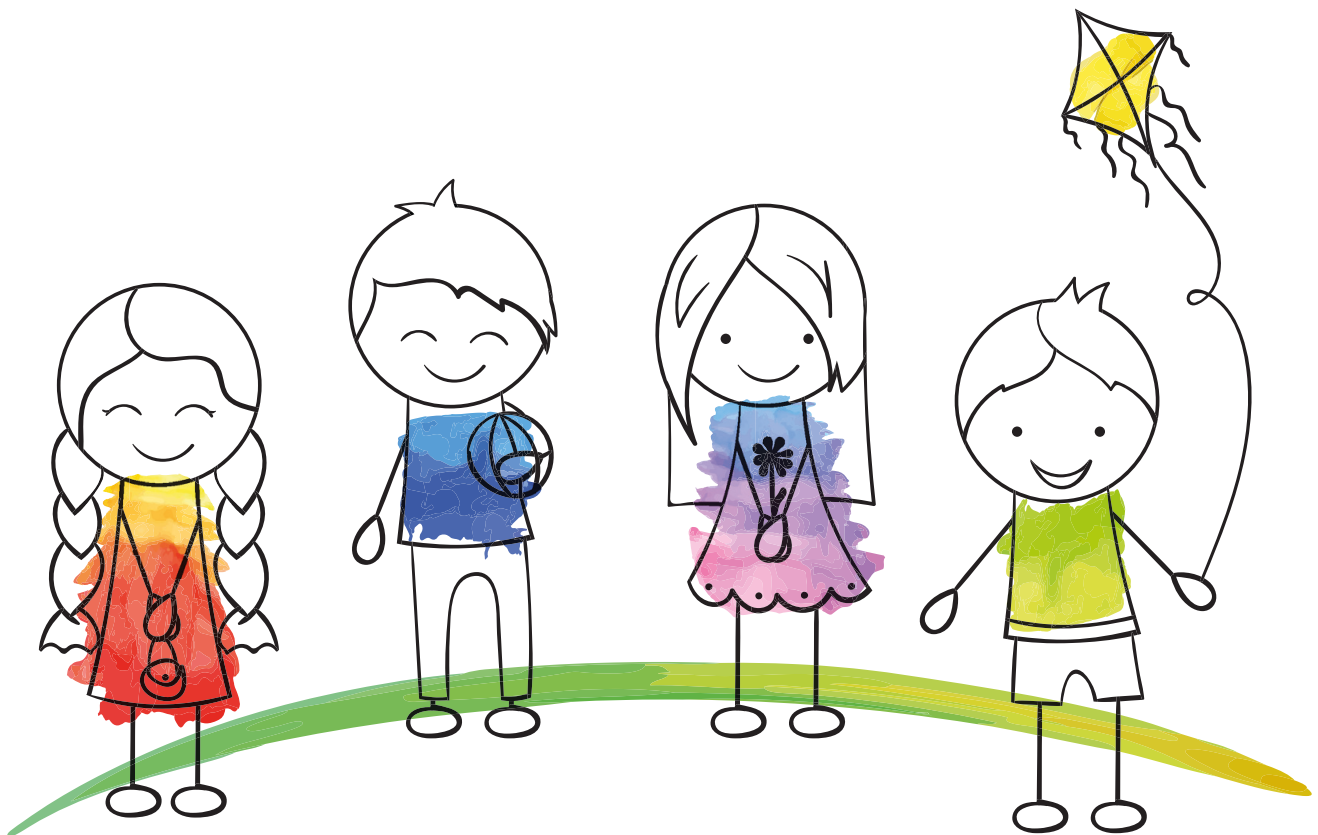


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Child Protection Policy

1. Introduction

1.1. About Us

English Play Corner is a private childcare facility in the city of Salzburg. We are based in a renovated family home with many rooms and a large surrounding garden. We run two mixed-age groups with a maximum of 28 children aged 3–6 years and two toddler groups with a maximum of 16 children aged 1.5–3 years.

We are a team of 12 staff members, all employed by the Association for the Promotion of English Language in Children. Our focus is on the playful introduction of the English language and outdoor play.

1.2. Why Do We Need a Child Protection Policy?

With this Child Protection Policy, we take a clear stand against all forms of boundary violations and violence and ensure that child protection in our institution is guaranteed to the greatest possible extent. We provide an environment that is particularly safe for children, where children's rights are upheld, where children are involved according to their abilities, and where their interests are front and center.

1.3. Goals, Purpose & Scope

- ★ The goal and purpose of this policy is to ensure that all children in our institution are protected from boundary violations and any form of violence.
- ★ In addition to child protection as our highest priority, the recommendations also provide a framework to protect staff from false accusations and to safeguard the institution's reputation.
- ★ The policy sets out clear responsibilities and procedures so that, in the event of suspicion or any indications, we can act in line with established guidelines.

1.4. Legal Foundations

This Child Protection Policy follows the legal requirements of the Salzburg Child and Youth Welfare Act, the Federal Child and Youth Welfare Act (KJHG), and the recommendations of the Austrian Child Protection Commission.

The following laws provide the legal framework for child and youth protection:

- ★ UN Convention on the Rights of the Child
- ★ Austrian Civil Code (ABGB)
- ★ Criminal Code (StGB)
- ★ Child and Youth Welfare Law
- ★ Salzburg Child Education and Care Act
- ★ Salzburg Youth Act

2. Violence and Its Forms

2.1 Boundary Violations & Violence

"Any actions that cause harm to a child, or could cause harm, are included – as well as the omission of essential actions. For the child, it makes no difference whether the violence is exercised unintentionally or deliberately." (UNICEF, n.d.)

2.2 Violence Has Many Faces and Forms

In German usage, the term "violence" can be divided into several categories. Violence can be described as the infliction of suffering on a physical and psychological level. The effects of violent actions, regardless of their nature, result in harm that can lead to the deterioration of personality. Individual growth and opportunities for development—physical, cognitive, emotional, psychosocial, and sexual—are equally impaired. Violence is understood as any form of criminal behavior towards an individual that involves the exercise of control and power.

CATEGORIES:	● physical	● sexualized	● psychological
	● neglect	● structural/institutional	● domestic
	● witnessed	● digital	

Physical Violence

Intentional use of physical force to the detriment of the child, regardless of intensity—ranging from a light slap to shaking and severe beatings, to the use of sticks and other objects.

Includes: hitting, shaking (especially infants and toddlers), pushing, kicking, punching, throwing objects, pulling hair, beating with fists or objects, banging the head against a wall, burning, attacks with weapons, up to attempted murder or murder.

Criminal law: e.g., §§ 83ff StGB (bodily harm).

Sexualized Violence

Actual or threatened sexually motivated touching of a child; all forms of sexual activity such as inappropriate touching, sexual intercourse, etc., as well as non-contact activities such as showing pornographic material. Sexual violence is an act of aggression and abuse of power.

Includes inducing or coercing children into sexual acts; often linked to sexual exploitation, e.g., producing and distributing abusive images online.

Criminal law: e.g., §§ 206f StGB (sexual abuse of minors).

Psychological Violence

Depriving a child of an age-appropriate, development-supportive environment and all forms of abuse via psychological/emotional pressure, e.g., coercion, shaming, humiliation, devaluation or rejection, ridicule, insults, intimidation, ignoring, isolating and locking away; witnessing domestic violence; stalking; bullying/cyberbullying (e.g., via social media); withdrawal of affection; inducing guilt.

Criminal law: e.g., §§ 105 (coercion), 107 (serious threat), 107b StGB (continued exercise of violence).

Neglect

"Ongoing or repeated omission of caring actions by responsible persons (parents or other authorized caregivers) necessary to ensure the child's physical and psychological care."

Subforms include:

- ★ Physical neglect: inadequate nutrition, clothing, hygiene, medical care, etc.
- ★ Educational/cognitive neglect: lack of communication and stimulation.

Structural/Institutional Violence

Violence embedded in the structures of a larger system (e.g., society, an organization, or a sector such as the education system).

Example: Chronic staff shortages in an inclusive kindergarten lead to overload and frequent misconduct (e.g., harsh tone), increasing complaints and high staff turnover; no supervision/intervision in place.

Domestic Violence

Violence between persons living in the same household or in a close (family) relationship, including violence between parents and children and between partners or ex-partners.

Witnessed Violence

A form of psychological violence occurring when physical violence is not directed at the child but at significant others in the child's environment (e.g., the child witnesses violence between parents).

3. Risk Analysis

In the risk analysis, all potential risks to children and their protection are identified, considering the service offered, premises, setting, leadership style, internal and external communication, and staff structure. The aim is to define measures that minimize risks for children as far as possible. Each area of daily work is systematically reviewed.

3.1. Risks in Room Design and Environmental Safety

Unsafe or unsuitable rooms increase the risk of accidents or uncontrolled contact.

Situations/areas at EPC (examples):

- * Staffing bottlenecks at opening/closing times
- * Cloakroom (changing clothes)
- * "Quiet time": one staff member alone with a subgroup in remote/poorly visible rooms
- * Bathrooms
- * Diaper changing and toileting
- * Mealtimes (self-directed eating)
- * Gym/indoor play hall (remote/poorly visible)
- * Small-group excursions or forest day
- * External persons/groups (e.g., recorder teacher, AVOS, janitor, cleaning staff, delivery personnel, tradespeople)
- * Garden: poor visibility, winding, not viewable from all sides
- * Kitchen: central and open
- * Applying sunscreen

3.2. Risks at the Personnel Level

Unclear or missing conduct rules can lead to boundary violations or inappropriate behavior, misunderstandings, privacy infringements.

Insufficient training in recognizing signs of abuse/boundary violations or handling sensitive situations may delay intervention and increase risk.

EXAMPLES:

- * Stress, overload, lack of retreat options
- * Staff shortages
- * Distraction
- * Missing foundational stance on child protection
- * Pursuing personal interests
- * No supervision; limited time for reflection/exchange
- * Limited training opportunities
- * Personal history

3.3. Risks at the Child Level

- * High aggression potential, lack of boundaries, low frustration tolerance/emotional control
- * Language barriers due to multilingualism, development, or impairment
- * Testing their strength
- * Mocking, exclusion, bullying
- * Self/other-perception (e.g., child sexual curiosity during diapering/toileting)
- * Insufficient strengthening of self-confidence

3.4. Risks at the Parent Level

- * Separation/divorce
- * Difficult drop-off/pick-up moments
- * "Helicopter"/"lawnmower" parenting
- * Conflicts between parents
- * Child stress due to late arrival

3.5. Risks in Structures and Processes

Error culture:

- * Fear of making mistakes
- * Looking away when mistakes are seen
- * Uncertainty during change

Inadequate documentation/follow-up of suspected cases

Processes and rules:

- * Little spontaneity & rigid daily schedule
- * Uncertainty about whether rules apply equally to all age groups (upstairs & downstairs)
- * Uncertainty in dealing with conflicts, rules & rituals

Communication:

- * Missing/insufficient/unclear communication can delay recognition of risks risk of delayed intervention or insufficient support.

4. Preventive Measures

To prevent boundary violations and violence in everyday work with children, preventive measures are essential. Effective implementation in an early childhood setting requires considering multiple factors: enabling child participation, a clear code of conduct, targeted team-wide training, transparency, and a functioning complaints system, among others.

4.1 Staff Requirements, Qualifications & Training

- ★ Thoughtful recruitment with defined criteria (including obtaining the Criminal Record Certificate under §10(1) Criminal Records Act and the Child and Youth Welfare Certificate under §10(1a) for the provider's obligation).
- ★ Regular training for all staff on child protection, including recognizing signs of abuse/boundary violations and the code of conduct.
- ★ Training on methods to strengthen children's self-confidence.

4.2 Code of Conduct for Staff

- ★ Staff act respectfully, appreciatively, and professionally; clear rules for interacting with children, including boundaries regarding touch and proximity.
- ★ Children are encouraged to express feelings and boundaries; their rights are respected.
- ★ Professional boundaries are maintained.
- ★ No private contact or communication outside the institution without parental consent.
- ★ No photos/videos of children without parental consent.
- ★ Respectful communication and behavior toward children and parents.

See *Appendix 1: EPC Code of Conduct*.

4.3 Room Design and Environment

- ★ Line of sight within rooms to create an open atmosphere.
- ★ Retreat spaces for children seeking calm.
- ★ Safety-checked play and learning materials.

4.4 Work with Parents

- ★ Open, transparent communication.
- ★ Information events on child protection and children's rights.
- ★ Consent forms for photos, excursions, etc.
- ★ Opportunities for parents to raise concerns and share observations.

4.5 Strengthening Children's Self-Confidence and Personality

- ★ Children's Parliament as an instrument.
- ★ Methods that strengthen self-perception and self-protection.
- ★ Age-appropriate activities and conversations that build confidence and empower children to set and defend boundaries.

EXAMPLES: praise and recognition; taking responsibility (setting the table, errands); encouraging independence; motivating persistence; trying new things; encouraging own solutions.

4.6 Strengthening Children's Rights and Self-Determination

- ★ Children are encouraged to exercise their rights and express opinions.
- ★ They learn to set boundaries and seek help when needed.
- ★ The policy promotes a culture of respect and appreciation.

EXAMPLES: child chooses preferred caregiver for diapering; offering options (e.g., portion size at meals); no "you must"; do not always intervene in conflicts—encourage children to find their own solutions.

4.7 Reducing Risk through Clear Structures

- ★ Established procedures for suspected cases and emergencies.
- ★ Staff know whom to contact in case of suspicion.
- ★ Documentation and reporting pathways are clearly defined.

4.8 Knowledge of Psychosexual Development up to School Entry

Understanding developmental phases helps assess age-appropriate behavior. Indicative phases:

First year: contact and closeness are important; oral pleasure (sucking, biting).

2-3 years: control of excretion; pleasure in letting go/holding back; "defiance phase"; enjoyment of messy play.

3-6 years: first questions about sexuality; curiosity about one's own/others' bodies; consensual exploration among peers of similar age/development can be normal; some children use genital stimulation to relieve tension (provide protected context); trying out gender-typical behaviors; questions like "Where do babies come from?" need answers.

EXAMPLES:

- ★ **Sex education:** age-appropriate naming of body parts; empowering children to recognize/defend against overreach.
- ★ **Preventive messages:** my body belongs to me; trust your gut; pleasant vs. unpleasant touch; you always have the right to say "no"; respectful, appreciative interactions; we listen when you want to talk.

4.9 Complaints Management

Everyone in our institution must be able to raise complaints—flexibly in form and timing.

Children: complaints are often expressed non-verbally (body language, gestures, facial expressions). Options: morning circle; one-to-one with key educator; or another trusted educator.

Parents: door-step talks; "parents' talks"; weekly office hours with lead educators, director, or provider (options posted in the facility).

Staff: bring issues first to the director, then to the provider; for professional matters, contact the Salzburg Office for Childcare (inspector, legal advisors) or the Chamber of Labour.

A list of low-threshold support institutions is provided in the appendix.

Our principles for handling concerns and complaints:

- * We strive for direct communication.
- * All concerns are heard and processed; we pursue joint solutions and inform about receipt and next steps.
- * Confidential handling builds openness and trust.
- * We give collegial feedback (using I-messages; no devaluation); we live an open feedback and error culture.

4.10 Child Protection Officers

A designated staff member serves as Child Protection Officer and first point of contact; name and contact are posted at EPC.

Our Child Protection Officers: Brigitte Edenberger-Traintinger

4.11 Our Attitude & Image of the Child

We respond to each child's needs with respect, appreciation, and tolerance, using empathetic language and modeling positive social values.

Boundaries provide orientation and safety; rules are enforced with logical consequences that help children learn. We reject any form of punishment or exclusion from the group.

Our image of the child

Every child is unique with great potential, eager to learn and explore. We offer rich play opportunities and space for creativity so children grow into confident, independent personalities. Children are individuals with rights that we respect.

Proximity and distance

Many 3–6-year-olds seek physical closeness, especially when in pain. We do not deny this: we comfort children if they want it. We also respect wishes for distance: each child decides whether and how long closeness is desired. For children uncomfortable with physical closeness, we offer calm retreats (cozy corner, personal cloakroom place). Kisses as signs of affection belong in the family—there are no kisses between staff and children or among children in our institution.

4.12 Supervision & Team Development

Regular supervision is an integral part of our work (reflection on stressful situations, resolving team conflicts, safeguarding pedagogical quality). Weekly small-team and monthly full-team meetings foster exchange, transparency, and shared responsibility.

5. Handling & Measures in Suspected Cases

5.1 Boundary Violations and Violence by Staff

Examples include: shouting, shaming, humiliation, favoritism, discrimination, coercion, tugging, pushing, ignoring, neglect, intrusive behavior up to sexual assault.

Misconduct and violence by staff are not tolerated; looking away or trivializing is not an option.

Response to suspected cases:

- ★ **Observation & documentation:** immediately document any signs (e.g., unfriendly or intrusive interactions).
- ★ **Trusted person:** designate a trusted contact for staff and parents.
- ★ **Involve external agencies:** in serious suspicions, notify the Youth Welfare Office to ensure an objective investigation.

Consequences:

- ★ **Internal measures:** immediate clarification; suspension pending investigation if needed.
- ★ **Legal steps:** initiate criminal proceedings when abuse is substantiated.

5.2 Boundary Violations and Violence Among Children

Conflicts and boundary crossings can be normal in toddler groups. Still, behaviors like physical altercations, biting, pushing, or aggressive language require attention.

Early intervention:

- ★ **Observe and act immediately:** de-escalate and talk to the child about behavior.
- ★ **Talk with the child:** explain what was not acceptable.
- ★ **Mediation:** guide children to express needs and find solutions.

Consequences:

- ★ **Discussion with the child** (particularly if repeated).
- ★ **Regulating measures:** brief "calm time" in a quiet space if needed.
- ★ **Involve parents** for repeated patterns to work on solutions together.

5.3 Violence, Boundary Violations, and Neglect from Outside

External experiences include domestic violence, neglect of basic needs, or harmful behaviors by caregivers.

Early intervention:

- ★ **Observation & documentation:** carefully document and inform leadership.
- ★ **Talk with parents** where possible and safe.
- ★ **Involve specialist agencies** (Youth Welfare, etc.) when warranted.

Consequences:

- * **Protective measures:** immediate steps to ensure the child's safety; inform authorities; temporary safe placement if needed.
- * **Psychosocial support:** referral for psychological support if required.
- * **Legal steps:** inform competent authorities (Youth Welfare, Police) for confirmed abuse or severe neglect.

5.4 Immediate Measures in Case of Acute Danger

Acute endangerment may occur inside the institution (staff or other children) or outside (family environment). The child's safety comes first.

Inside the institution:

- * Immediate separation of the child from the suspected person
- * Inform management and Child Protection Officer without delay
- * Document the incident
- * Suspend staff member pending clarification if necessary
- * Involve external agencies (Youth Welfare Office, Child Protection Center, Police)

Outside the institution (family environment):

- * Document observations and abnormalities
- * Speak with the child in a protected setting (no leading questions)
- * Carefully approach parents (only if this does not endanger the child)
- * Notify Youth Welfare pursuant to §37 B-KJHG if there is reasonable suspicion

GOAL: immediate protection of the child; document all steps thoroughly for transparency and traceability.

6. Reporting Pathway for Suspected Cases

6.1 When Does the Duty to Report to Child and Youth Welfare Apply?

(§37 B-KJHG 2013 – excerpt)

IT APPLIES WHEN:

- ★ there is reasonable suspicion that a specific child is or has been abused, sexually abused, neglected, or otherwise seriously endangered,
- ★ the danger cannot be averted through one's own professional action, and
- ★ the endangerment is perceived in the course of professional activity.

A reasonable suspicion requires concrete indications beyond mere assumptions and must refer to a specific, named child. Indications arise from one's own observations, the child's statements, and professional conclusions. Further investigations beyond one's remit are not required; simple inquiries are.

The reporting pathway ensures legal, correct handling; all parties must take the duty to report seriously and act transparently.

Suspicion of abuse or neglect

- ★ **Observation & documentation:** note signs (physical, psychological, behavioral changes) with date/time/description; file with observation records; inform the Child Protection Officer.

Initial internal clarification

- ★ **Talk with the child** (if possible) in a careful, child-friendly manner.
- ★ **Sensitive talk with parents** (where appropriate), unless it endangers the child; consider direct involvement of external agencies if needed.

Duty to report under Salzburg regulations

- ★ **Internal reporting:** report to management and Child Protection Officer; they assess next steps.
- ★ **External reporting:** if suspicion persists, inform the Youth Welfare Office or another competent authority—immediately; anonymously where possible; official report if anonymity isn't possible.

Reporting to the Youth Welfare Office

- ★ **Report the concerning situation** in writing or by phone.

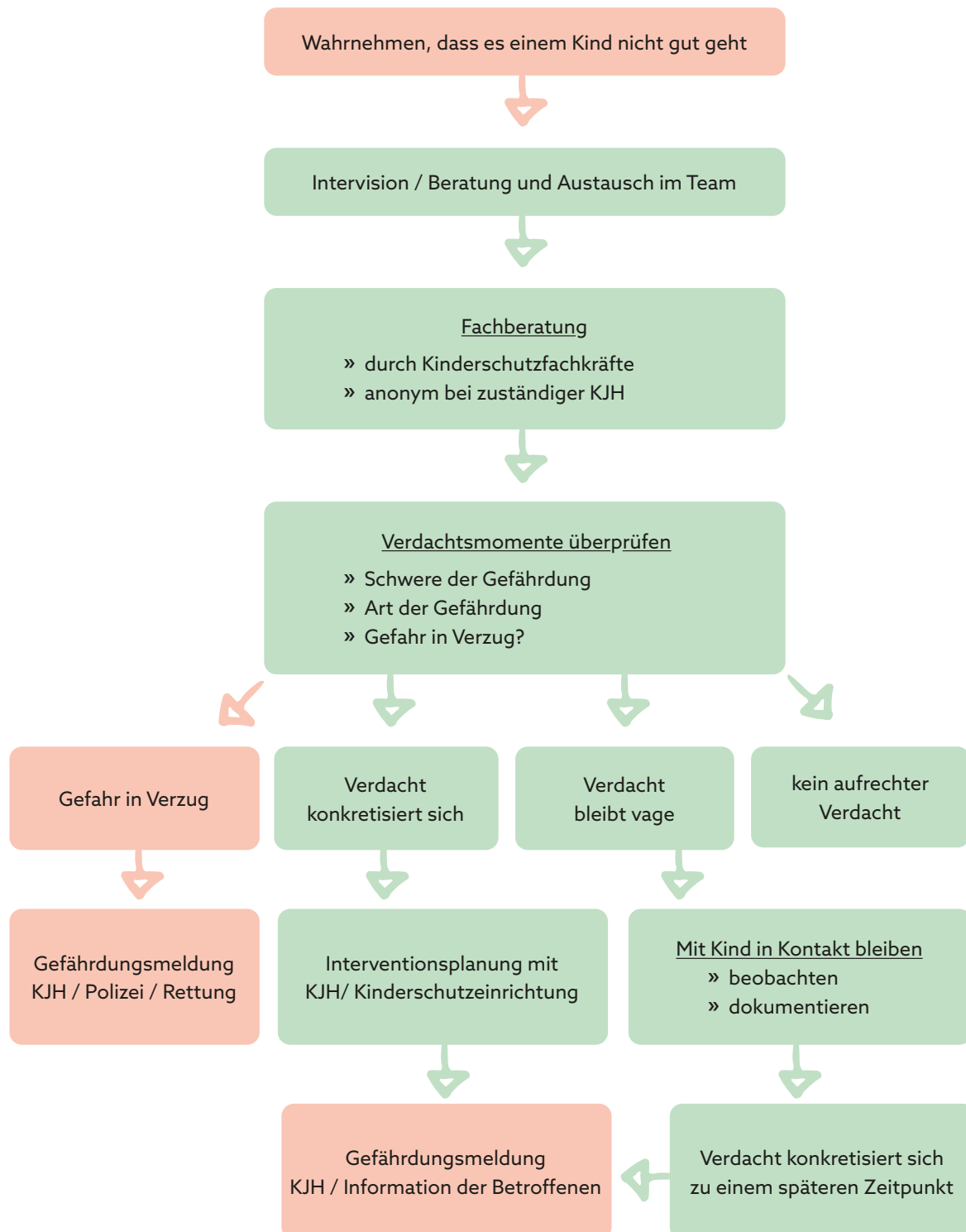
Further procedure

- ★ **Assessment & protective measures** by Youth Welfare; contact with parents; legal action as needed.
- ★ **Psychosocial support** for the child if necessary.

Ongoing communication

- ★ **Internal communication:** involve all relevant professionals regularly.
- ★ **Follow-up:** document the pathway; regularly review continued risk and effectiveness of protective measures.

Procedure in case of suspected child endangerment



(Figure reference: brochure "(K)ein sicherer Ort, Kindeswohlgefährdung erkennen und helfen", BKA 2020.)

7. Documentation, Reflection & Quality Management

7.1 Documentation

Covers recording incidents that could endanger a child's well-being and maintaining action plans in suspected cases to fulfill the reporting duty (§25(2) BKJHG 2013) and inform the Child Protection Officer.

What is documented?

- ★ **Incidents:** signs of abuse, sexual abuse, neglect, or other endangering acts.
- ★ **Action plans:** graded procedures for boundary violations/violence and handling suspected cases.
- ★ **Reports:** fulfilling legal reporting obligations to the competent Child and Youth Welfare authority; the Child Protection Officer is informed and supports reporting.

7.2 Quality Management

A living child and youth protection policy requires continuous reflection and quality assurance.

- ★ Address child/youth protection in job postings and interviews.
- ★ New team members sign the Code of Conduct with the employment contract.
- ★ Management reviews the policy with new staff before/at start.
- ★ Ensure new staff read and sign the facility's action guidelines; file a copy on site.
- ★ New staff attend the next online course on child and youth protection (e.g., Selbstewbusst/ZEKiP offers).
- ★ Document suspicions and complaints.
- ★ Notify the Child Protection Officer in cases of suspicion.
- ★ During pre-term preparation days, adjust the base concept as needed; provide annual instruction to all team members focusing on risk analysis and code of conduct.

7.3 Regular Evaluation & Further Development

The policy is a living document, reviewed annually. During pre-term days, evaluate:

- ★ effectiveness of existing measures,
- ★ emergence of new risks,
- ★ need for adjustments.

Feedback from staff, parents, and children actively informs further development.

8. Cooperation with Professional Agencies

(References adopted as of 25 Aug 2025.)

Children experiencing violence can seek help from the following (phone/email).

Emergency / Confidential counseling

- * **Police: 133**
- * **Kinder- und Jugendanwaltschaft (kija):** +43 662 430550 · kija@salzburg.gv.at
- * **Kids-line (Salzburg):** 0800 234 123 · www.kids-line.at
- * **Rat auf Draht:** 147 · rataufdraht@orf.at
- * **Kinderschutzzentrum Salzburg:** +43 662 44911 · www.kinderschutzzentrum.at

For parents seeking help:

- * **Pro Mente – 24h crisis hotline:** 0800 539 935 · pms@promentesalzburg.at
- * **Victim helpline:** 0800 112 112 · opfernotruf@weisser-ring.at

For women seeking help:

- * **Frauennotruf (Salzburg):** +43 662 881 100 · beratungsstelle@frauennotruf-salzburg.at
- * **Women's helpline against violence:** 0800 222 55 · frauenhelpline@aoef.at
- * **Gewaltschutzzentrum Salzburg:** +43 662 870 100 · www.gewaltschutzzentrumsalzburg.at
- * **Pro Mente – 24h crisis hotline:** 0800 539 935 · pms@promentesalzburg.at

Authorities:

- * **City of Salzburg – Youth Welfare Office:** +43 662 8072 3261 · kjh@stadt-salzburg.at · www.stadt-salzburg.at
- * **BH St. Johann im Pongau – Child & Youth Welfare:** +43 6412 6101 6211 · bh-st-johann@salzburg.gv.at · www.salzburg.gv.at/bezirke
- * **BH Tamsweg – Child & Youth Welfare:** +43 6474 6541 0 · bh-tamsweg@salzburg.gv.at · www.salzburg.gv.at/bezirke
- * **Telefonseelsorge (crisis line):** 142 · www.onlineberatung-telefonseelsorge.at/mailberatung.html

9. Communication & Transparency

Open communication is central to child protection.

- ★ **Internal:** all staff must immediately share observations, concerns, or suspicions; information is handled confidentially.
- ★ **External:** parents are regularly informed about the policy; in suspected cases, they are involved transparently where possible and appropriate.

In case of escalation or public attention, management coordinates communication with authorities, media, and specialist agencies.

10. Protection Against False Accusations

Child protection also means protecting staff from unfounded accusations.

- ★ Risk situations (e.g., diapering, “quiet time”) are secured by double staffing or open settings.
- ★ Pedagogical actions are documented for traceability.
- ★ The Code of Conduct sets clear rules for proximity and distance.

This protects both children and staff from boundary violations and misunderstandings.

11. Guidelines for Respectful Conduct with Children

1. Core Principles

- ★ We treat children with respect, appreciation, and tolerance.
- ★ Children are independent individuals with their own rights.
- ★ We respect each child’s need for closeness and distance.

2. Boundaries of Closeness

- ★ Physical contact only if desired by the child or necessary for care (e.g., diapering, comforting).
- ★ Kisses between staff and children are not permitted.
- ★ Intimate areas may be touched only for caregiving reasons and always transparently.

3. Communication

- ★ We communicate respectfully with children, parents, and colleagues.
- ★ Shouting, humiliation, threats, or shaming are strictly prohibited.
- ★ We actively listen to children and take their concerns seriously.

4. Professional Conduct

- * No private contact with children (e.g., social media, WhatsApp).
- * Photos/videos only with written parental consent.
- * Gifts are limited to pedagogical contexts and require management approval.

5. Staff Protection

- * Risk situations (e.g., diapering, "quiet time") are, where possible, double-staffed or conducted in visible spaces.
- * Pedagogical actions are documented to ensure transparency.
- * Regular supervision and collegial feedback are integral to our work.

6. Reporting Obligation

- * Any form of violence or suspicion of child endangerment must be reported immediately to management or the Child Protection Officer.
- * Looking away, trivializing, or concealing are not acceptable.

12. Sources

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- * Hilfswerk Salzburg – Schutzkonzept für Kinder und Jugendliche (Kurzversion) (23 Aug 2025)
- * Salzburg Provincial Government – Gewaltfreie Erziehung (Einfache Sprache) (25 Aug 2025)

