

Plan to Protect®

REGISTRATION AND SUPERVISION

Written by Melodie Bissell, President and co-author of Plan to Protect®

At this time of the year, we are gearing up to have a fresh start with the children and youth, which we serve. We are committed to launching strong, and desire to have a strong protection plan in place.

The purpose of this paper is to provide a strong standard of protection to minimize incidences of abuse and to minimize risk to children, youth, organizations and their staff and volunteers carrying for the children.

We will provide 8 Tips for Success in providing a strong Plan to Protect® with your registration and supervision processes. For more information on this topic, refer to Plan to Protect® manual, and the recorded webinar with the same title, found on the Member Section of our website.

You may be reading this with a school, church, club, community centre, camp, or business in mind. The principles and tips laid out here can be applied to any context. For additional support, please do not hesitate to contact Winning Kids Inc., at 1-877-455-3555 or at info@winningkidsinc.ca. We provide Plan to Protect®, a strong STANDARD of protection and abuse prevention for child and youth serving organizations.

Here is a case study example of a childcare program, which provides care for children during a church service. The leaders in this program used a paging system to notify parents when infants were crying. Each parent was assigned a number that would be flashed in the sanctuary, with the anticipated outcome being that the parent would notice their number and come to the nursery and retrieve their child.

On one occasion a young infant was crying and nothing seemed to help quiet the young one. The childcare leaders posted the number and immediately “dad” came to the rescue the crying infant. The leaders were happy to hand the crying baby over to “dad”. He graciously thanked them for their care and headed towards the exit. At the same time the baby’s true father came to pick up his child in the childcare area (he had not immediately observed his number posted). You can just imagine his alarm when he saw a stranger with his child in his arms leaving the building. He was able to rescue his child from the arms of someone who had intended to kidnap his child. That was a very close call.

Ideally if there was a strong registration system in place, this and other similar incidences could be avoided. Below you will find Winning Kid’s 8 tips and recommendations for implementing successful registration and supervision within your organization.

8 Tips for Success in Launching a New Program Year

- 1. Begin by consulting your organization's policies.** Your policies may clearly identify what is required for registration and supervision of children and youth. If your policies do not clearly identify what is required consider updating your policies to match current insurance and legal requirements. Also reference your insurance requirements. Insurance companies that provide abuse coverage, have protocols on this topic. For example, are you aware that most insurance companies providing abuse coverage stipulate that children under the age of six must be signed in and signed out by a parent or guardian? Complying with insurance requirements, and having abuse coverage in place, will mean you have the liability coverage in place if a case arises.
- 2. Maintain a master copy of your screened worker list. Check who needs training, criminal record check updates, etc.** If you centralize your screening process, you will be able to maintain a master list of everyone within your organization who is screened and trained. We recommend you have one process for screening all of your volunteers and staff. This will allow you to easily call in a substitute when one is needed. The individual may be helping in the nursery this week and next week be asked to work as a hall monitor. Once an individual has been screened by the organization, it is just a matter of maintaining the attendance at refresher training and renewals of criminal record checks. Much of the work of screening is front-loaded but once it is complete it will call for minimal maintenance. At this time of year, ask program leaders for the names of those who will be working in their departments. A quick check against your Master List, will let you know if each individual is adequately screened and trained
- 3. Determine the level of supervision needed. Staff activities / programs according to the level of risk.**

Knowing your children and your leaders will help you be able to assign groups better. On the registration form for each child, which should be updated annually, you will be able to note if the child has any known allergies, disabilities, or special needs (i.e. hearing impaired, learning disabilities, emotional irregularities, or physical disabilities). Also note if they are on medications that will need to be monitored for side effects. Many programs encourage teachers and leaders to provide a summary report at the end of each class year on each child. This information may be helpful in placement of children and/or distancing children where bullying has been a factor, or students where conflict has occurred in the past.

Knowing your leaders will also enable you to match strong, experienced leaders with younger, in-experienced leaders and to modify groups based on teaching styles.

Providing opportunities for pre-registration will allow you to project your staffing needs and meet ratios appropriately. When sufficient staff and volunteer resources are not available to provide adequate supervision, an excursion/activity should not take place – the organization should always reserve the right to cancel an event at any time if supervision or safety requirements cannot be met. One organization holds an end of the summer Sunday Sundaes, where they serve ice cream, hold a carnival, and have pre-registration for

their Fall programs. Though this requires some creativity and planning, it will minimize the time needed during the first day of programming for the bulk of your registrations. It also gives them valuable insight to the number of children who will be attending program in the Fall so they can make sure they have the necessary number of volunteers/staff.

4. Schedule training for each new program year. Offer orientation and refresher trainings. Identify how you will train those that are unable to attend i.e. On-line training.

Begin each new program year by holding a Plan to Protect® training. As your Master List of screened workers grows, you will need to provide less Orientation Trainings but more frequent Refresher Training. A Refresher Training can be offered in half the time and can include creative methods of teaching as a means of reminding your staff and volunteers the essentials of identifying children that are in need of protection, reporting procedures, recognizing activities and interactions of risk, and important child and youth protection procedures.

We recommend that you offer two Orientation Trainings per year and a minimum of two Refresher Trainings. Personnel should attend an annual Refresher Training. This too reflects requirements of insurance companies. Anticipate that you will have personnel that are not able to attend due to other family or work related emergencies. Winning Kids Inc. provides options for on-line training or LIVE webinars to accommodate the training of these individuals. For more information visit www.winningkidsinc.ca

5. Do a walk through of your facilities.

It is amazing how we can miss what is in front of our own faces. What to look for: Are there clear site lines into classrooms, and locks on closets and storage areas? Make any necessary modifications to your premises to include outlet covers in nursery and pre-school rooms. Remove items that could cause injury (i.e. piled up chairs, electrical cords, outdated electronics, recalled items and construction material).

We would recommend that your team together do a walk through your facilities or venue where your program will be held – use a critical, objective eye. Perhaps ask someone to walk through who can provide a new set of eyes. Note if there is decorations or items blocking the clear site lines of the window – remove these. If you stand in the hall, can you see every corner of the classroom or is there places where students could hide, or where someone could be hiding. One member organization recently installed convex mirrors, and adjusted the height of dividers and washroom doors in the toddler room in order to make their location safer – perhaps you might also need to make similar modifications.

6. Recruit, schedule and train your Screened Hall Monitors. Having strong and effective Hall Monitors in place is one of the secrets to success with Plan to Protect®. Strong Hall Monitors are individuals who are on the lookout for anyone who may do harm, anticipate vulnerable locations within the building, and able to not only identify elevated risk but will address them. Effective Hall Monitors are also able to stand in the gap temporarily when needed i.e. When you are not able to comply with the two adult rule in a classroom, having a Hall Monitor that is screened and trained, they can provide the oversight and accountability needed to meeting a strong standard of protection.

When you train your Hall Monitors, do a walk through of your facilities, demonstrate how an effective hall monitor will do their roles (i.e. Checking washrooms, checking blind spots in classrooms, and testing the locks on storage closets).

If you have two Hall Monitors on duty at the same time, one male and one female, they could go into washrooms and make sure that no one is loitering in a washroom or lurking in the washroom, waiting to harm children.

Select strong Hall Monitors that can challenge leaders who are not following policy or mismanaging their power, influence, authority and control. Choose someone who you can follow up with regularly and who will provide you with accurate details and observations on activities and programs within your organization.

7. **Update your supplies for each classroom and for registration booth.** At the beginning of a program year, is the perfect time to make sure your classrooms are well equipped with the supplies and resources to administer a strong protection program. The following suggestions are not exhaustive.

Many of our members will provide each classroom with a binder with copies of the registration form for each child that has registered for the program. This binder should be kept in a locked cupboard but be easily accessible to those working in the classroom. This binder should be easily accessible to teachers so they can confirm information (i.e. who can pick up children, whether or not a student has allergies, can have their photographs taken, or has disabilities that they should be aware of).

Each classroom should be equipped with a well-stocked First Aid Kit (see Plan to Protect® Health and Safety for the recommended contents of the First Aid Kit) and an updated telephone list of emergency contact numbers.

Each classroom should have an ample supply of pens, Incident Report Forms, Attendance Sheets, and Registration Forms for new children and youth. You will also need name tags, diaper bag labels, hand held paging devices (walkie-talkies) or assigned numbers to notify (page) parents of younger children,

8. **Plan out your calendar year.** I encourage individuals who are Program Leaders of Plan to Protect® to set aside time on their calendars to focus on Plan to Protect®. Commit to 33 hours a year to provide leadership in meeting the strong STANDARD of protection. These 26 hours are above and beyond the time spent training and screening your volunteers. We estimate that it takes approximately one hour to screen one volunteer.

Here is a guide on maintaining Plan to Protect®:

Spend 15 minutes per week – reviewing your attendance records, ratios and incident reports. If time permits, compare the attendance record against your registration forms. Make sure you have registration forms for each child who has attended your programs.

Spend 1 hour per month – comparing your volunteer and staff duty roster against your Master List of screened workers. Also insure your Letters of Consent communicate the risks associated with the activities that you have scheduled to do.

Spend 1 (8 hr.) day per year – to test your procedures against your Plan to Protect® policies, to update your templates and forms, and to schedule your Plan to Protect® trainings. Make sure these training dates are put on the Master Schedule and communicated to the volunteers.

Again, only 33 hours per year will help you raise the bar on protection and help you achieve a high STANDARD of protection.

In closing, these eight tips are designed to help you launch your new program year with a strong Plan to Protect® in place. From the tips in this article, what is your Plan to Protect®?

Finally, don't forget to ...

BE SAFE!

HAVE FUN!

CREATE MEMORIES!

PROVIDE OPPORTUNITIES FOR FEEDBACK!

HOLD A TEAM HUDDLE!

ADJUST AS NEEDED!

CELEBRATE SUCCESSES!