INCLUSIVE DESIGN RESEARCH CENTRE

CHILD SAFEGUARDING POLICY AND PROCEDURES

Last revised 2017-05-30

Introduction

Content Advisory

Sections of this policy discuss various forms of harm and abuse against children in plain (but non-sensationalized) language.

About The Inclusive Design Research Centre

Founded by Dr. Jutta Treviranus in 1994 as the Adaptive Technology Resource Centre at the University of Toronto, the Centre moved in 2010 to OCAD University and changed its name at this time.

The Inclusive Design Research Centre (IDRC) is a research and development centre where an international community of open source developers, designers, researchers, advocates, and volunteers work together to ensure that emerging information technology and practices are designed inclusively. The group promotes inclusion through a full complement of activities:

- growing design and development practices,
- creating tools that others can use and contribute to,
- teaching the principles and techniques of inclusive design,
- advocating for inclusion in international standards, and
- providing services that match solutions with individuals.[1]

The IDRC conducts a broad range of activities in collaboration with local and international partners. In addition to more traditional academic research activities, the IDRC provides consulting services on inclusive design to government, nonprofit and private sector organizations; provides a range of services related to individual and organizational accessibility assessment[2] ; and works through many sectors of society both locally and internationally to advance inclusion.

About OCAD University

Founded in 1876 as the Ontario College of Art & Design, OCAD University is dedicated to art and design education, practice and research and to knowledge and invention across a wide range of disciplines.[3] The university is located in Toronto, Ontario, Canada.

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[1] http://idrc.ocadu.ca/about-the-idrc
[2] http://idrc.ocadu.ca/services
[3] http://www.ocadu.ca/about

About This Policy

The IDRC is committed to the dignity, respect for, and safety of everyone touched directly or indirectly by its activities, but also recognizes children as an especially marginalized and vulnerable population requiring special consideration.

Where children's vulnerability and marginalization intersects with other forms of marginalization such as (but not limited to) intellectual or physical disability, it is additionally incumbent upon those working with them to exercise care and respect for those multiple contexts. The IDRC conceives of disability as a mismatch between the needs of the individual and the design of the product, system or service[4], and strives in its work to evolve technology and society towards rectifying these mismatches.

The IDRC has developed this policy as part of its work with the Oak Foundation[5], and acknowledges the assistance of Keeping Children Safe[6] in its development, and the child safeguarding policy of CBM[7] for inspiration and language.

Principles

The IDRC's Child Safeguarding Policy is based on:
- The Keeping Children Safe Child Safeguarding Standards,
- The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1989 (and its optional protocols),
- The child protection legislation of Canada and Ontario,
- The Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans, and
- International good practice.

The IDRC'S Child Safeguarding Policy upholds the following principles:
- All children have equal rights to protection from harm.
- Everybody has a responsibility to support the protection of children.
- Organisations have a duty of care to children with whom they work, are in contact with, or who are affected by their work and operations.
- If organisations work with partners, they have a responsibility to help partners meet the minimum requirements on protection.
- All actions on child safeguarding are taken in the best interests of the child, which are paramount.

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[4] http://idrc.ocadu.ca/about-the-idrc/49-resources/online-resources/articles-and-papers/443-whatisinclusivedesign
[5] http://oakfnd.org/
[6] http://www.keepingchildrensafe.org.uk/
[7] http://www.cbm.org/Child-Safeguarding-246770.php

Definitions and Terms

Child Safeguarding

Child Safeguarding is the responsibility that organisations have to make sure their staff, operations, and programmes do no harm to children, that is that they do not expose children to the risk of harm and abuse, and that any concerns the organisation has about children's safety within the communities and contexts in which they work, are reported to the appropriate authorities.

"Do no harm" refers to organisations' responsibility to "do no harm" or minimise the harm they may be doing inadvertently as a result of their actions, programming or services.

Harm

Harm expansively includes any and all conduct or actions, deliberate or inadvertent, that damages an individual's body, mind, emotions, or dignity. In the context of child safeguarding this may include (but is not limited to) physical, sexual and emotional abuse, stigma, neglect, abandonment, bullying, or exploitation.[8]

Child

For purposes of this policy, a *child* is any person under 18 years of age. It should be specifically noted given the IDRC's academic context that students of OCAD University may also be qualified as children under this definition.

Scope

This policy applies to all staff and associates of the IDRC. Given the IDRC's institutional context and diversity of projects, the following is to be specifically noted:

- As a research institution that is part of OCAD University, the IDRC also must conform to the administrative[9], academic[10] and labour relations[11] policies of the university.
- This policy applies most specifically to the IDRC and its direct partners when working on projects that directly or indirectly involve children; reasonable effort will be made to ensure all partners are aware of the policy and the IDRC's status as an organization committed to child safety.

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[8] See Appendix A for more extensive definitions of forms of harm and abuse.
[9] http://www.ocadu.ca/about/administrative-policies.htm
[10] http://www.ocadu.ca/students/student-policies/academic-policies.htm
[11] http://www.ocadu.ca/services/human-resources/labour-relations.htm

Prevention

The IDRC aims to prevent children from harm or violation of their rights through the steps in this section.

Risk assessment and mitigation

A risk assessment will be undertaken prior to any activity involving children, out of the ordinary visits where children are present, research with children, or any other IDRC function directly or indirectly involving children. Where appropriate, this assessment will be conducted as part of the planning phase of any project.

Staff recruitment, selection and training

All recruited and existing IDRC staff will be familiarized with the Child Safeguarding Policy and the associated Code of Conduct, with more extensive training for those whose work will directly or indirectly involve children.

The IDRC will follow these procedures when recruiting staff for positions specifically dealing with children:

- The Child Safeguarding Policy will be referenced within the job posting.
- When checking references from previous employers, a candidate's work with children will specifically be asked about.
- Candidates will be asked specific child safeguarding questions as part of any interviewed.
- Where appropriate, background checks will be required of candidates.

Code of Conduct

All IDRC staff and partners whose work involves children are required to understand their responsibility to keep children safe and abide by the Child Safeguarding Code of Conduct at Appendix B. While the primary purpose is to protect children, the Child Safeguarding Code of Conduct also serves to guard staff and partners from false accusations, and preserve the name and reputation of the IDRC.

Any violation of the Code of Conduct will result in disciplinary procedures.

Safe program design

The IDRC commits to designing and delivering programs, products and other activities in a manner that safeguards children. This includes (but is not limited to) risk assessments, safety strategies, and adherence to the conduct guidelines of this policy in the execution of all IDRC activities involving children.

Communication guidelines

Use of images and children's information

When depicting children in communications of any sort (including photographs and video), the IDRC commits to doing so in a way that maintains the respect, safety and dignity of both the individual child, and respectful depictions of children generally.

Specifically in regards to photographs and video, the IDRC will follow these guidelines[12]:

- Any photos or videos taken, published or disseminated will be done so with the permission of any involved children, in addition to the informed consent of their parents or guardians. Children will have the purpose of the photo or video explained to them in an appropriate manner, and asked for their permission.
- Consent should include information about who will be able to view the photo once it is published and information about platforms on which the photo will be shared.
- Consent for one purpose may not be transferred to other purposes; the IDRC will avoid blanket consent statement for photography or video when putting on programs, events, and otherwise involving children.
- If possible, children should be shown the photos or videos notified of publication, and provided with a means of accessing the photo or video (as should their parents or guardians).
- If there is reason to believe the child and/or their parents or guardians does not understand the photographer or videographer's intention regarding publication due to language barriers or otherwise, the photo or video should not be published.
- The value of using or publishing a photo or video of a child should be weighed against regard for the child's privacy, safety, and integrity.
- Photos or videos of children should illustrate the autonomy and dignity of the child; they should not intend to generate sympathy or display children as objects of pity.

Use of social media, email and other online contact with children

All relevant aspects of the IDRC's Child Safeguarding Policy must be followed in online spaces where IDRC staff and partners may engage with children in the context of their work. Some additional specific guidelines that apply in online contact with children are:

- Be cautious in engaging in extensive interactions online using accounts representing a project, institution or similar that you have responsibility for.
- If a child initiates contact online in regards to IDRC projects or work, conversations should be kept focused on the project or work, and not become excessively personal.

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[12] The language of these guidelines are adapted with thanks and permission from the *Guidelines for Ethical Photography* of the University of Toronto's International Centre for Disability and Rehabilitation, available at http://icdr.utoronto.ca/feat/ethical-photography.

- If children are using social media in the context of IDRC projects or work, they will be advised on safe social media practice such as not using their full names or sharing their location.

Responsibilities

This policy has been approved by the Director of the IDRC in consultation with the appropriate senior administrators of OCAD University. The IDRC's management is responsible for ensuring the implementation of the policy with staff and partners through ongoing training and review.

Partners

Partners working on IDRC projects or events involving children agree to abide by the IDRC's Child Safeguarding Policy, or develop their own comparable policy as a condition of the partnership.

Reporting and responding to concerns

All staff and partners of the IDRC are responsible for reporting and responding to concerns about the safety of children they come into contact with in the context of their work.

These guidelines are in addition to the legislative Duty to Report of the Ontario Child and Family Services Act[13], or obligations to safeguard children in other legislation or policy. Staff and partners should in particular be aware and familiar with legislative requirements around responding to reasonable suspicion of child abuse or neglect, and not consider these guidelines a substitute or alternative to them.

The following guidelines apply in responding to concerns about abuse and reporting them appropriately:
- Reports of abuse from children are to be taken seriously and treated with respect. If a child approaches you about abuse:
  - Listen carefully, but do not press for information;
  - Let the child know what your next actions will be, and that you'll let them know what happens;
  - Do not investigate, inform, question or confront the alleged abuser; and
  - Record carefully what you heard on the reporting form (Appendix C), and follow the reporting procedure.
- Suspicions or concerns about abuse arising in other contexts should follow the reporting procedure outlined in Appendix D and be recorded in writing on the reporting form (Appendix C).

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[13] https://www.ontario.ca/laws/statute/90c11#BK114

- To the extent possible under law and policy, the confidentiality of all concerned (child, informer, and accused) must be protected, for protection of the child's privacy.
- It is the responsibility of the designated manager (see Appendix E for a list of designated managers) to whom a concern is delivered to make sure all relevant policies and legislation are followed, including but not limited to:
    - The application and (if necessary) review of internal procedures in response to the concern or complaint.
    - The reporting of the concern or complaint both to external agencies such as law enforcement and/or child protection, and internally to the IDRC's Director and appropriate OCAD University administration.
    - The recording of the IDRC's response to and actions taken in light of the concern or complaint.
    - Responsibility or appropriately delegation of responsibility for ongoing monitoring or other actions related to any investigation or follow-up.

Monitoring and review

In collaboration with the Director of the IDRC and appropriate senior administrative staff of OCAD University, the IDRC's management is responsible for the ongoing monitoring and review and revision of this policy.

At minimum, this policy will be reviewed every three years, or whenever it is shown necessary that additional issues need to be identified and addressed through this policy.

Appendix A: Definitions of Harm and Abuse

The list below is not intended as a comprehensive, restrictive list of possible scenarios for harm or abuse of children, but defines and details common definitions.[14] In the context of this policy, the word "caregiver" means any person with responsibility for safeguarding a child, including anyone working with or interacting with children.

Physical abuse is any deliberate physical force or action which results, or could result, in injury to a child. It can include bruising, cutting, punching, slapping, kicking, beating, shaking, burning, choking, biting, poisoning, throwing a child, holding a child under water, or any other harmful or dangerous use of force or restraint. Most child physical abuse is associated with physical punishment or is confused with child discipline. Using belts, sticks or other objects to punish a child can cause serious harm and is also considered abuse. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or caregiver fabricates the symptoms of or deliberately induces illness in the child.

Neglect occurs when a child's parents or caregivers do not provide essential requirements for the child's emotional, psychological, or physical development. This may include failure to provide basic needs such as adequate food, sleep, safety, education, clothing, or medical treatment, or not taking the steps to ensure that these basic needs are provided for the child. If the caregiver is unable to provide the child with basic needs due to financial inability, it is not considered neglect, unless relief has been offered and refused; in this case, the parent or caregiver should have made every reasonable effort to obtain these basic needs for the child. Neglect also includes leaving a child alone or failing to provide adequate supervision.

Sexual abuse occurs when a child is used for the sexual gratification of an adult or an older child. The child may co-operate because he or she wants to please the adult, is being offered a reward (e.g. money, accommodations, drugs), or is acting out of fear. It includes any form of sexual intercourse, exposing a child's private areas, indecent phone calls or online chats, kissing/touching/fondling for sexual purposes, allowing/forcing a child to look at or perform in pornographic pictures or videos or engage in prostitution, encouraging a child to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or watching a child undress for sexual pleasure or perform any of the aforementioned acts. Sexual abuse often involves a child being manipulated or coerced or thinking that the behaviour is normal. The abusive relationship between child and perpetrator may involve an imbalance of power where the child's options are limited. In certain circumstances, sexual abuse can be misunderstood by children and adults as consensual.

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[14] Some of the language of these definitions are adapted from Appendix G of the "Canadian Incidence Study of Reported Child Abuse and Neglect 2008" (http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/cm-vee/csca-ecve/2008/cis-eci-16-eng.php) and the Ontario Association of Children's Aid Societies "What Is Abuse?" (http://www.oacas.org/childrens-aid-child-protection/what-is-abuse/)

Emotional abuse (or maltreatment): is a pattern of behaviour that negatively impacts a child's emotional development and sense of self-worth. It involves actions or failure to take action in a way that causes or could cause serious and negative behavioural, cognitive, emotional, or mental repercussions. Emotional maltreatment can include verbal threats, intimidation, exploitation, terrorizing, or making excessive, aggressive or unreasonable demands that place expectations on a child beyond his or her capacity. Emotional abuse includes constantly criticizing, teasing, belittling, insulting, rejecting, ignoring, or socially isolating the child. It may also include exposure to domestic violence.

Appendix B: Child Safeguarding Code of Conduct

Acceptable Conduct

IDRC staff and partners whose work involves children *must* adhere to the following standard of conduct:

- Treat children with respect regardless of race, colour, gender, language, religion, mental or physical disability, sexuality or gender identity, and national, ethnic or social origin, or any other status.
- Whenever possible, ensure that another adult is present when working with children; if circumstances require a private conversation with a child, meeting spaces where conversational privacy is preserved, but the adult and child are visible to others, (example: glass-walled offices) should be used if at all possible.
- Use positive, non-violent methods to manage children's behaviour.
- Contribute to an environment where children are listened to, respected, valued, and do not have their concerns and feelings dismissed because of their status.
- Ensure physical contact with children is appropriate at all times and not an invasion of a child's privacy; in specifically assisting children with disabilities, wherever possible consent to the physical contact must be actively sought from the child.
- Respond to all concerns, allegations, or disclosures according to the reporting procedures.
- Cooperate with any investigation into violations of the child safeguarding policy (including interviews) and proactively disclose information helpful to the investigation.
- Maintain appropriate professional boundaries when engaging with children in online contexts including (but not limited to) email and social media.

Unacceptable Conduct

IDRC staff and partners *must not,* within the context of their work with children:
- Make decisions or assumptions about children based on stereotypes about children generally, or about a specific child's race, colour, gender, language, religion, national, ethnic or social origin, mental or physical disability, sexuality or gender identity, or any other status;
- Touch children in an inappropriate or insensitive way, including hugging, kissing or other affectionate contact;
- Have close physical contact with children beyond that required to perform their job duties;

- Abuse or harm children physically, verbally, or emotionally, or take or fail to take actions that place a child at risk of abuse or harm;
- Make sexually suggestive comments or actions to a child, even as a joke,
- Engage in sexual activity or have a sexual relationship with a child – mistaken belief in the age of a child is not a defense;
- Spend any time alone with a child away from others, unless specifically required to do so for legitimate professional purposes such as therapy or counselling; and
- Make use of their position and their relationship with children involved with the IDRC to exploit them or cultivate inappropriate relationships outside of the context of work, including in online contexts.

Appendix C: Child Safeguarding Concern Reporting Form

INCLUSIVE DESIGN RESEARCH CENTRE - CHILD SAFETY CONCERN FORM

Report Details:
- Time:
- Date:
- Place:

Reporter's Details:
- Name:
- Address:
- Contact #:
- Occupation:
- Relationship to Child:

Child's Details (as available):
- Name:
- Age:
- Date of Birth:
- Gender:
- Address:
- Special considerations (e.g. means of communicating with the child, comfort with certain genders)
- Relationship to IDRC:

Description of the Incident or Suspicion of Concern:
- Date and time:
- Location:
- Others present:
- Observations about the child (injuries, behaviour, fear or other emotions, general impression):
- Additional observations (i.e. of alleged perpetrator(s), environment, etc.):
- Child's report (including child's words if possible):
- Reporter suspicion:

Child's Name:
Child's Date of Birth:

Alleged Primary* Perpetrator's Details (as available):
- Name:
- Age:
- Date of Birth:
- Address:
- Relationship to Child:
- Relationship to IDRC:
- Current Location:
- Is this individual aware of your suspicion or this report or any other information that would lead them to believe a report may be made (e.g. knowing the child has shared information)?

* include additional pages if more than one alleged perpetrator is identified or implied

Has Emergency Medical Attention Been Required?

- Details:
- Provided by:

Has the the appropriate child protection agency been contacted (e.g. Children's Aid Society)?
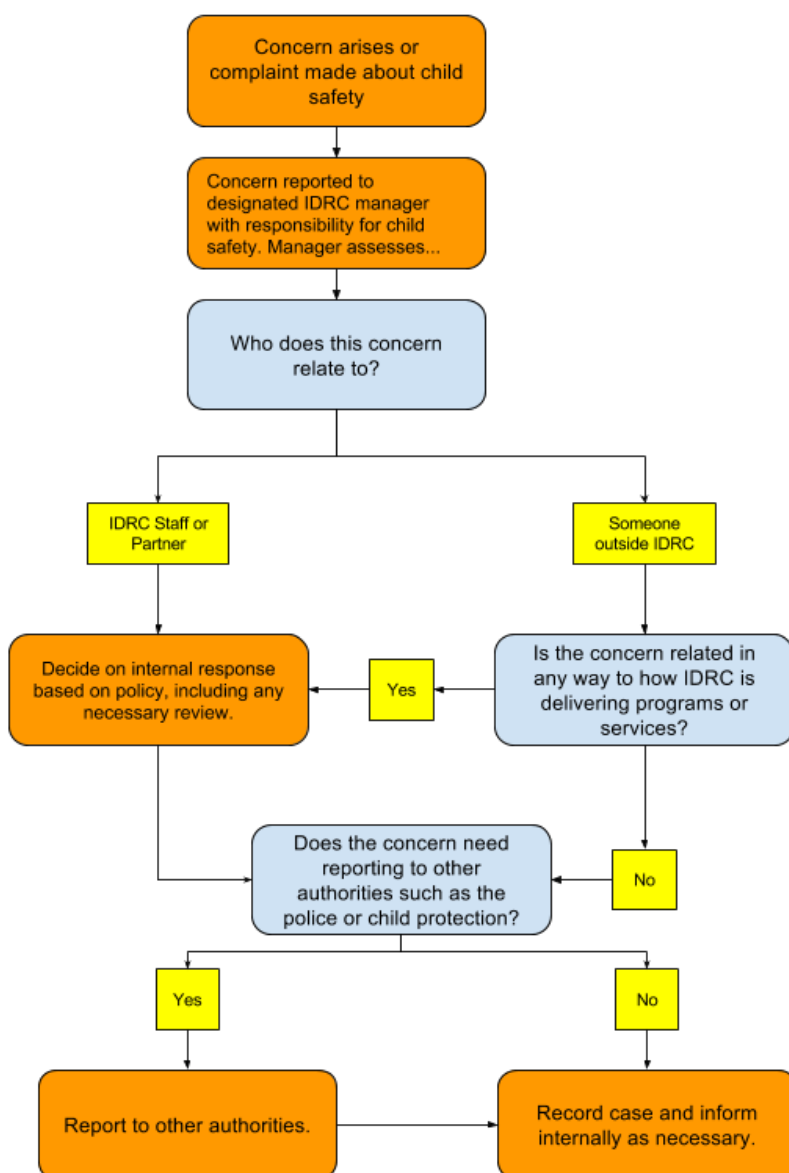- Date and time:
- Details:
- Contact person(s) at the agency:

Current Safety of Child:
- Current location:
- Current person(s) responsible for the children's well-being (include contact details and organization or agency name):

Who Else Knows? (Include Contact Details)
- Agencies:
- Family members or other individuals:

Appendix D: Child Safeguarding Concern Reporting Procedure

1. Concern arises or complaint made about child safety
2. Concern reported to designated IDRC manager with responsibility for child safety.
3. Manager assesses…
   a. *Who does this concern relate to?*

    i.   **IDRC staff or partner**
1. Decide on internal response based on policy, including any necessary review.
2. *Does the concern need reporting to other authorities such as the police or child protection?*
   a. **Yes**
      i. Report to other authorities.
      ii. Record case and inform internally as necessary.
   b. **No**
      i. Record case and inform internally as necessary.

    ii.   **Someone outside the IDRC**
1. *Is the concern related in any way to how IDRC is delivering programs or services?*
   a. **Yes**
      i. Decide on internal response based on policy, including any necessary review.
      ii. *Does the concern need reporting to other authorities such as the police or child protection?*
         1. **Yes**
            a. Report to other authorities.
            b. Record case and inform internally as necessary.
         2. **No**
            a. Record case and inform internally as necessary.
   b. **No**
      i. *Does the concern need reporting to other authorities such as the police or child protection?*
      ii. Yes
         1. Report to other authorities.
         2. Record case and inform internally as necessary.
      iii. No
         1. Record case and inform internally as necessary.

Appendix E: Designated IDRC Managers with Responsibility for Child Safety

Name and Position	Contact Information
Jess Mitchell Senior Manager Design Research & Development, Inclusive Design Research Centre	(416) 977-6000 ext 3965 jmitchell@ocadu.ca
Iris Neher Manager, Inclusive Design Research Centre	(416) 977-6000 ext 3951 ineher@ocadu.ca