NEMECSEK PROGRAM
Aspects of auditing

The purpose of auditing is to review the principles, rules, and procedures that ensure the protection of children and the exercise of their rights within the organization. The audit should review these issues and areas and then summarize them later in the Child Safeguarding Policy so that it is available, understandable and clear to all children and adults.

This set of criteria is based on international recommendations, but of course it is not set in stone: based on the activities of your organization, other areas may be worth integrating and considering.

1. INTRODUCTION

A brief description of the activities, mission, and goals of the organization with particular regard to how they relate to children.

In connection with the introduction, it is worth thinking about:

• What is regarded as the main task of the organization?

• In what form does it want to achieve these?

• What professionals does it employ or work with to achieve its goals?

• When and why was the organization formed?

• What are regarded as the main/core values of the organization?

2. RESPONSIBILITY – WHO IS PROTECTED BY THE ORGANIZATION?

To make it clear who is protected by the organization, as a first step, it is important to determine exactly who it regards as a child. The age limits for children and juveniles are not uniform in Hungarian legislation. Everyone that has not reached the age of 14 is regarded as a child. Nevertheless, the age group from 14 to 18 enjoys special protection due to their vulnerability. According to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, a child is anyone that has not yet reached the age of 18.

As a second step, it is also important to identify the range of children for whom the organization takes responsibility. It helps to handle the cases effectively if the organization does not only protect children with whom it has a direct legal relationship from abuse and endangerment, but also those with whom it comes into contact only indirectly.

With regard to responsibility, it is worth considering:

• Is it clear to the organization that every person under the age of 18 is a child?

• Is the organization responsible for children accompanying their siblings?

• Does the organization take responsibility for children who visit its programs as guests?

• Is the organization responsible for children in general? (eg.: it does not make statements or expressions in its communication that are degrading or stigmatizing to children)

3. RESPONSIBILITY – WHAT DOES THE ORGANIZATION PROTECT CHILDREN FROM?

Once you have established who the organization extends its responsibilities to, you also need to determine exactly what it wants to protect children from. It is very important not to have abstract concepts in the policy, but specific behaviours, as this will make the content of the rules protecting children understandable and clear to everyone.

4. RESPONSIBILITY – WHEN AND WHERE DOES THE ORGANIZATION PROTECT CHILDREN?

After considering exactly who the organization wants to protect and from what, it should record <u>when and where this protection needs to be provided</u>, i.e. how far the responsibility of the organization extends. In this case, protection means that the organization considers the possible sources of danger, risk factors (prevention) in these areas, and also provides safeguards (handling) in these areas as discussed in the next section.

Within the buildings of the organization

Within the walls of the organization, the adults working and staying there take responsibility for children in all programs implemented by the organization. Parents/legal representatives support the presence of children for the same reason that children visit the organization: they trust that their protection and safety is guaranteed there.

At external programs organized by the organization

This responsibility is not limited to the buildings of the organization: protection and safety must also be provided for children at external programs. It is always the adults that are present, that organize and provide the particular program, that are responsible for the children.

At professional programs related to children, as well as in the fields of communication and fundraising

The responsibility of adults is maintained even when children are not present. It is important to ensure that the organization does not communicate anything that children do not want, or something that may affect them negatively in any way on any platform. In other words, when communicating about children, we should always act in their best interests.

To do this, it is important to state that the organization:

• does not make or publish a recording to which the child concerned and his/her parent/legal representative have not consented;

• does not manifest itself in a way that violates the dignity of children, their right to privacy, information and freedom of expression;

• ensure that children are only interviewed by a person (eg.: a journalist) who knows and accepts child protection rules.

On online interfaces

The online presence of children is becoming increasingly important to them. The online world is in many ways the same communication and social space as "real life". There are many benefits to this (the world opens up, a wealth of knowledge and information is

available, physical distances are reduced), but it is also important to recognize the dangers: we lose sight of conflicts, children can encounter people and content that endanger them and their well-being.

With regard to online safety, it is important to think about:

• What ensures the safety of children on the tools and surfaces that the organization makes available to them?

• Does the organization take responsibility for abuse in online communities? What to do if someone experiences conflict or ostracism in the online space? Who moderates the "class group" or other community interfaces for children and how?

• How can adults related to the organization contact children on online interfaces and for what purpose?

5. SAFEGUARDS – WHAT GUARANTEES THE PROTECTION OF CHILDREN?

Once you have determined exactly who, from whom, where and when the organization wants to protect, it is also important to think about <u>how it ensures this protection</u> for children.

Knowledge

1. Adults related to the organization

Getting knowledge of the adults related to the organization (e.g.: co-workers, contractors, volunteers, or partners) means two things. Firstly, the organization needs to get to know the adult it wants to work with as much as possible. The most that can be done for ensuring the well-being of children, is to surround them with adults that are committed to protecting children and ensuring their rights. To this end, for example, when hiring new employees, an important consideration should be whether there has been a suspicion of child abuse or abuse in connection to them in the past.

Secondly, the adults who work with us need to get to know the organization: the values and rules that permeate and define the day-to-day operations of the organization, and as a result, the activities of the given adult. Child protection rules should apply to everyone that is affiliated with the organization in any form. This applies from the beginning of the connection/legal relationship.

When it comes to getting to know adults, it is important to consider:

• How does the organization verify the suitability of the person who wants to join? (e.g.: Does it require a curriculum vitae/motivation letter/reference letter/certificate of good conduct? Does it require a declaration that the adult has not previously committed a crime against children?)

• In what process and based on what criteria does the organization decide whether to work with someone?

When it comes to learning about child protection rules, it is important to consider:

• How does the organization ensure that adults are familiar with the rules and processes that protect children?

• Does the organization provide any training in this regard?

• How does the adult demonstrate that he or she knows and understands child protection rules?

• How does the adult acknowledge that he or she accepts these rules as binding on him or her?

• Does the organization have a Code of Conduct or other document on the conduct to be followed towards children? How does the adult get knowledge of these and how does he/she justify this?

• Are the consequences clear if someone does not follow these rules?

2. Children and their parents/legal representatives

In the interests of transparency, security and mutual trust, it is important that, in addition to adults working for the organization, <u>children and their parents/legal representatives related to the organization know and understand</u> the rules and processes that protect them and their children. One of the most important guarantees for a child to feel safe in a given organization is that they know their rights and also know how and to whom they have the opportunity to make a report when they feel bad or in danger.

In this regard, it is important to consider:

• How does the organization ensure that children are aware of their rights and the rules and processes that ensure their protection?

• Is there a "child-friendly" version of the documents containing these rights (eg.: Code of Conduct, Rules of Procedure) that is available for and understandable to children?

• How does the organization ensure that children's parents/legal representatives are aware of the rules, processes and responsibilities that protect children?

• Are the documents containing these available on the website of the organization or other interface?

Commitment and supervision

In addition to knowing the rules and processes that protect children, who approves them and who monitors their implementation is also important.

In many ways, it is beneficial for the rules to be adopted at management level. Firstly, it is a guarantee that the child safeguarding framework will be truly clear and unambiguous at all levels, thus strengthening its binding force. Secondly, it also has symbolic significance, as it clarifies the values and the high-level commitment to children's rights of the organization.

It is also important to have a designated person or group responsible for enforcing child safeguarding rules. This group has a key role in children's well-being: the specific reports are sent over to them, they help to deal with specific issues, and they bring together and coordinate processes related to children's rights and child protection.

Rules protecting children must not mean empty documents that have been gathering dust - they must follow the way that children and the world around them are constantly changing. It is therefore essential to see from time to time how appropriate these rules and processes are for the protection of children, how effective they are in practice, and whether they need to be modified.

Of course, adults dealing with children are bound not only by the rules of the organization, but also by the various national and international laws - you must be aware of these changes. Rules and regulations protecting children only provide real guarantees if they are known by all adults and their knowledge is certain and up-to-date.

To do this, it is important to consider:

• Who accepts child protection rules?

• What are the responsibilities of the management of the organization regarding child protection rules?

• Who is the designated person/group monitoring the implementation of child protection rules?

• In what form does he/she monitor their implementation?

• What special tasks and responsibilities apply to him/her?

• How often and in what form does he/she report to the management of the organization?

• Are the consequences clear if he/she does not comply with their obligations?

• Who and in what form informs adults and children about changes in legislation?

• Who reviews child protection rules, how often and in what form?

• What does the organization do to keep children's and adults' knowledge up-to-date? (eg.: regular internal training/professional day, publication of information materials)

Reporting and handling

The key to protecting children is to recognize their vulnerability and bring it to the attention of a person who can handle the situation properly. Recognition and reporting of the problem can come from a child or an adult - which is why it is important for everyone to be aware of when and to whom they should make the report, and what opportunities they have to do so.

What happens exactly after the report depends, firstly, on the specific case and on the best interests of the children involved; and secondly, frameworks need to be defined to ensure that the handling of specific cases can serve the protection of children.

Regarding the report and its handling, it is important to consider:

• Does the organization take all reports seriously?

• Is it clear who is the person/group responsible for compliance with child protection rules?

• Do the children know when and where the responsible person/group can be reached?

• Are there other people the children can turn to for help? (eg.: properly trained peer helpers, trusted adults)

• What are the options for reporting?

• Can children or adults report anonymously?

• Is it clear and transparent what will happen after the report?

• Is it clear whose role it is and for how far its responsibility extends?

• Are the deadlines for the procedure clear?

• Are the reports and subsequent steps properly documented (in detail and transparently)?

• From whom and in what form will the person who made the report receive feedback and information later?

Participation of children

Even though adults are responsible for the children entrusted to them, many times it is the children themselves who know best what they want and what they need. But this is not the only reason why it is important for <u>children to be able to participate in the life of the organization and to be able to have a say in the decisions that affect them.</u> It is also important for the well-being of children, for the mutual trust between adults and children, that we treat children as partners: to have the opportunity to form and express their opinions, to be respected and taken into account by adults.

In order to form children's opinions, it is important to consider:

• Do children receive adequate (detailed and understandable) information about issues that affect them?

• Are they properly informed about the process of their participation and their role?

• Are they given enough time to form their opinions?

• Are they given enough resources, besides time,to form their opinions? (e.g.: training; 'child-friendly' information materials; a room where children can consult)

In order to express children's opinions, it is important to consider:

• What opportunities do children have to express their views on issues that affect them?

• Is children's participation voluntary in all cases?

• Can children participate in matters that affect them without discrimination?

• Is there a person with the right competencies and qualifications who is responsible for the children's participation?

• Does the organization provide sufficient resources for children? (e.g.: time, room, financial resources)

• Are parents/legal representatives properly informed about children's participation?

• Is this documented in writing?

It is important to think about the consequences of the expression of children's opinion:

• Do adults respect children's opinions?

• Does expressing an opinion have no negative consequences for children?

• Do children's opinions reach those responsible for decision-making?

• Do children receive feedback on how their participation/expression of opinion influenced the functioning of the organization or a specific decision?