



PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH OF
VICTORIA



Child Safe Christian Ministry to children with disability

The following information is aimed to help people in children's ministry in the PCV take practical steps to enhance the safety of children living with disability who participate in the life of the Church.

- Our foundation is always the Word of God - we know from the Word that each child has been made in the image of God (Genesis 1: 26-28) and is unique and precious to God (Psalm 139: 13-14), regardless of ability and personal circumstances.
- Making people welcome and practising hospitality to all (including children with disability and their families and/or carers) is a key biblical value:
 - Matthew 25: 42-46
 - 1 Timothy 5:10
 - Titus 1:8
 - 1 Peter 4:9
 - Romans 12:13
 - Hebrews 13:2
 - Galatians 6:10
 - Exodus 22:21
 - Exodus 23:9
 - Leviticus 19:33-34

- We recognise that each child with disability is different and experiences their disability differently. Romans 15:7 says, *"Accept one another, then, just as Christ accepted you, in order to bring praise to God."*
- We know that we need to listen to, and respond to, the voices of children with disability (or their families and/or carers) in our ministry planning and decision-making.
- We seek to work in collaboration with families and/or carers to support the child with disability. We talk to the children and the families and/or carers of children, with disability, to understand the nature of the disability/ies and the needs and supports necessary to safely minister to the child. We seek to reasonably practically meet and/or accommodate these needs and supports, so that no child is prevented from accessing the Gospel ministry of the PCV.
- We will talk with children with disability and their families about safety and the church physical environment, because we want to know 'what makes you feel safe here?', so we can ensure each child in our ministries experiences the love of Jesus in both our words and deeds.
- In our churches and ministries we want to ensure that the physical environment can accommodate the needs of the people with disability (e.g. physical access, bathroom

facilities to provide support as required and independence when appropriate). We will work together with Sessions and Boards to improve access and support in our church buildings.

- When working with children who require support for personal care activities we will be instructed by the families and/or carers of these children in making sure that there are clear guidelines and practices for these personal care activities and appropriate supervision. We will support people in children's ministries in such circumstances to know, understand and implement these guidelines and practices as they care for the children needing these to be in place.
- We will always ensure appropriate levels of supervision are provided for activities involving children with disability (e.g. including a support person, implementing a buddy system, including the parent or carer to promote safety).
- We will seek input from families and/or carers about the most appropriate way to communicate child safety information and provide personal safety information.
- We will communicate how to raise concerns and seek further help by ensuring children and families and/or carers know which ministry leaders(s) to go to about this. We will listen to children with disability and respond appropriately

Resources:

[We all sit together at the same table – including adults and children with disability in the PCV](#)

[The Pastor's heart – podcast – making church accessible to all](#)

[Everyone Welcome – making church accessible to all](#)

[Questions to ask families and/or carers to create a plan to accommodate and safely include children with disability](#)

[How to develop a ministry for children with disability](#)

[Practical ideas](#)

[Access Keys](#) – a document which explains access to buildings, locations and events – consider creating an access key for your church and children's ministries

[Asking questions](#)