

# **ORGANIZATION OF EVENTS WITH CHILDREN AND MINORS BASED ON INTERNATIONAL CHILD SAFEGUARDING STANDARDS**



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(Relevant for events at local, municipal, national, regional meetings as well as extra-curricular activities and field trips)

## Introduction

This document outlines the essential criteria for hosting events involving children and minors, prepared by the NGO ACDC. It establishes the expected behaviors and conduct for both adults and children across various settings, including local, municipal, national, and regional meetings, as well as extracurricular activities and field trips.

## Applicability

These standards apply to all personnel involved in organizing and monitoring events with children and minors' participation.

## Standards

Definition of events:

- Event without an overnight stay but that involves transporting children.
- Event with overnight stay that involves transporting children and significant distances within their home country, to a place where they will stay away from family.

## Planning

While planning an event, the following aspects must be addressed:

1. Preparation phase:
  - Selection of child participants and agreement from children, caregivers, and other relevant adults
  - Selection of staff involved in the event
  - Pre-departure briefing
  - Risk assessment and management for the event
  - Contingency plans for incidents (including a "Lost Child" procedure)
  - Transportation arrangements (when applicable)
  - Venue and accommodation planning (for physical events)
2. Implementation phase:
  - Expected behavior of children and minors as participants
  - Expected behavior of adult participants (organizers and monitors)
  - Monitoring
  - Breach of standards
3. Follow-up activities:
  - Post-event briefings

## 1) PREPARATION PHASE

### **Selection of child participants and agreement from children, caregivers, and other relevant adults**

When an identification and election process of children and minors is planned, a safe, transparent, and equitable process shall be ensured. For this process, the selection shall be based on diversity across several areas, including gender, age (13-18 years), religion, rural versus urban residence, school attendance, socio-economic status, ethnic background, and disabilities.

The parents/caregivers provide a signed consent (at least one week before the trip) form authorizing the child to travel for the specified event, training, seminar, or camp, including the medical and emergency information while also confirming their consent for the chaperone to act on their behalf for medical emergencies of their kids if needed. The parent/guardian shall also sign a waiver of liability foregoing any claims against NGO ACDC and the donors in connection with the child travel, including claims for injuries, sickness or costs related to the travel beyond that which was agreed in the funding request. The information identified as confidential needs to be always safeguarded. This information should be accessed only by the implementing partner, funding partner or audit.

### **Selection of staff involved in the event**

For events that involve transporting children and significant distances within and beyond their home country, to a place where they will stay away from family, the following key positions must be appointed after satisfactory background checks:

- The event Focal Person
- The Field Trip Focal Person
- Chaperone (based on the criteria given below)
- Facilitators

The responsibilities of the Event Focal Person (EFP) include advanced planning, event activities, and coordination of the evaluation of each event/trip. In the case of larger groups, the Event Focal Person shall have an assistant to whom some responsibilities might be delegated. Selected well in advance of the trip or event<sup>1</sup>, the Event Focal Person must receive comprehensive briefings to prepare adequately. Depending on the size and nature of the event, the roles of the Field Trip Focal Person and Event Focal Person may be performed by the same person. The Event/Trip Focal Person is trained to help and guide children on how to report concerns and can be identified by an agreed insignia such as wearing a scarf around their wrist.

The chaperone serves as a support person for a child and/or a group of children they are accompanying to an event/trip. The recommended adult-to-child ratios to keep the children safe are: 4 – 8 years – 1 adult to six children; 9 – 12 years one adult to eight children; 13 – 18 years – one adult to ten children<sup>2</sup>. The chaperone should ideally be someone who knows the child, who speaks the same language, and with whom the child has a trusting relationship. It is

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<sup>1</sup> If the focal person resigns prior to the event/trip or is unable to attend event/trip for any reason, a new focal person must be named ASAP to manage the trip successfully.

<sup>2</sup> Gender balance and adequate ratio of chaperones to children must always be taken into consideration.

recommended that chaperones not be parents/formal caregivers if other chaperones are possible and appropriate to the child and situation. The chaperone must be over the age of 24. Chaperones should be trained and they shall receive a proper briefing to ensure they can carry their chaperone duties to the expected standard.

Facilitators guide the discussion process during the events. They intervene to keep the group objectives on track and manage the interaction between non-personnel/non-associates (visitors, donors, media representatives) and children during the event (including the press conferences).

### **Pre-departure briefing**

Prior to the event, a letter must be sent to parents/caregivers, in advance, notifying them of the details and expectations of the trip/event along with the request for child participation. This letter should be approved by the relevant senior management.

A preparatory workshop, group, or individual should be organized with parents/caregivers and child participants before the event. During the workshop the parents/caregivers:

- Are made aware of their responsibilities when giving permission for their child(ren)'s participation. This would include expectations of children's behavior and the consequences of any breach of relevant policies, including the code of conduct.
- Should receive a list of accompanying adults with their status
- Are provided with detailed information on whom to contact in case of any concerns
- A final, confirmation, letter including dates, times, itinerary, address(es) of accommodation, and emergency contact numbers is communicated to the parents.

Children/young people:

- Understand the role they will play at the event
- Are made aware of possible risks, understand the forms and nature of abuse, and know whom/how to report concerns.

After the event, child participants and minors should have an opportunity to provide feedback and share what they have discussed/learned at the event in a follow-up meeting.

### **Risk assessment and management for the event**

Event/trip focal point and NGO ACDC personnel should undertake an exploratory visit as part of the visit/site-specific risk assessment, which will assist with pre-planning. In the process of selecting and reviewing the venue, the Event/Field Trip focal person should ensure that the venue:

- is accessible for participants with disabilities (e.g., ramps, handrails, accessible toilets).
- is fulfilling the minimum international standard for fire and hygiene.
- is adequate for children: offering a quiet space for children to work in and rest.
- is adequate for effective supervision of children, including managed access from unauthorized persons to make sure they are safe
- has controlled and monitored access to food and drinks (if applicable)

## **Contingency plans for incidents**

The organizer/Implementing Partner must have a developed Emergency Action Plan in place ahead of the event. The written plan will consist of several types of documents including essential information such as a diagram or site plan of the venue with shelter-in-place location, exits, and outside sites marked; emergency kit and supplies information. The EAP should mandate common and specialized procedures along with specific threat and hazard vulnerabilities and responses. Alongside the systematic headcount (before leaving each site, and periodically thereafter), for large groups or younger children, colour-coded and numbered tags may be used. A 'Lost child' procedure/plan should be in place and discussed with children and chaperones prior to the start of the event.

Transportation and associated travel formalities (when applicable)

Any travel arrangements must follow NGO ACDC regulations related to travel processes and procedures.

Accommodation (when applicable)

Any accommodation arrangements must follow NGO ACDC Standards for child safeguarding, mentioned above.

## **2) IMPLEMENTATION PHASE**

### **Expected behaviour of participants**

**Child participants and/or minors** must be informed that their participation in the event requires them to respect the event rules and regulations including treatment of other participants with respect and follow instructions of the Event/Trip Focal Point. For more information, please refer to the: Code of Conduct.

Adult participants accompanying children before and after the event, and from the moment of child pick-up to the return of the child to a clearly authorized caregiver, must follow child safeguarding regulations. All possible accompanying adults must have satisfactory checks completed and recorded.

Chaperones and Facilitators must sign the Code of Conduct and a written statement of expected responsibilities before the event/trip.

The responsibilities of the chaperone start from the time the child is handed over from its parents/guardians and will only end when she/he safely hands over the child to the parent/guardian on return to their respective cities/countries. The way in which a chaperone takes care of children should be appropriate to their age and maturity.

During the event sessions, Facilitators must ensure children are protected from any harmful information or content they do not need to know and for which they may not have the understanding and maturity to cope. Facilitators must be prepared to stop discussions or presentations that are inappropriate and consider convening time out if necessary.

During the event, children and minors should always be treated with respect, and ensure they are not provided with information inappropriate to their age or asked to comment on matters inappropriate to their age. It should be ensured that children are not asked to disclose any sensitive personal information or any other information that might put them at risk; this may include matters relating to violence or sensitive political issues.

### **Monitoring**

Forms, agreements, and checklists contemplated by these Standards must be filed and retained by the implementing partner/Field Trip Coordinator in accordance with data protection standards. It is recommended that good practice examples and case studies relating to child safe programming be collected during the monitoring and evaluation process.

### **Breach of Standards**

Departure from these Standards will mandate the reporting of such breaches to Event/Trip Focal Point. Event/Trip Focal Point in consultation with Senior Management must determine if such violation should be treated as:

- Misconduct, and should trigger the reporting obligations under Child Safeguarding Policy or Framework
- Whether violations should instead be treated as performance issues to address with NGO ACDC personnel or associates
- Whether other measures must be considered for breaches, beyond those specified in the Framework in case the violation pertains to non-ACDC staff.

## **3) FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITIES**

### **Post-event briefings**

After the event, child participants should have an opportunity to provide feedback and use their experience of participating in the event. Child participants should have an opportunity to share what they have discussed and learned at the event. This could mean organizing a follow-up youth meeting in their schools or communities.

Additionally, the organizers shall organize an opportunity for a feedback discussion with the staff involved as well as with the funding donor. The feedback shall be used to further improve the quality of similar events in the future.

