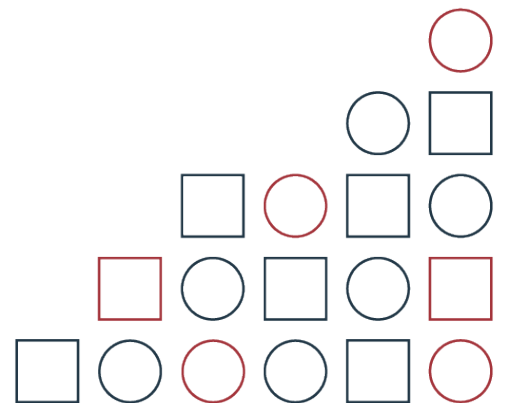


Global Child Safeguarding Policy



Introduction

Nutrition International (NI) is Canada's global nutrition organization. Founded in 1992, NI (formerly the Micronutrient Initiative) is dedicated to delivering proven nutrition interventions to those who need them most.

NI has grown significantly in the past five years and expects this to continue through at least to the end of the current strategic plan (2024). While we increase our investment in efforts to reach more children with health and nutrition interventions, we stand committed to preventing child abuse and to the safeguarding of children.

NI fully acknowledges the duty of care to protect and promote the welfare of children and young people it comes into contact with through our programs. In addition, NI is committed to ensuring child safeguarding practice reflects statutory/legal/legislative responsibilities and current guidance and advice and that it complies with best practice and any specific local requirements. NI recognizes that it is the shared responsibility of all adults to do what they can to prevent child abuse in all its forms.

This policy sets out our values, principles and beliefs and describes the steps we will take to meet our commitment to safeguard children.

Definition of a child

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child defines a child as “any human being under the age of eighteen, unless the age of majority is attained earlier under national legislation.” This means every human being under the age of 18 unless under the law applicable to the child, the threshold of adulthood is declared earlier.

Canada became a signatory to the Convention on May 28, 1990, and ratified in 1991.

For the purposes of this policy, NI considers a child to be a person under the age of 18 years.

The term “young person/people” is also used in this policy, in conjunction with the term “child”.

Values and principles that inform the policy

- **Children's welfare:** The best interests of the child are paramount.
- **Equity:** All children and young people have a right to be protected from abuse regardless of age, gender, disability, culture, economic status, language, racial origin, religious beliefs or sexual orientation.
- **Children's rights:** Children have the right to happy and healthy development without fear of harm or exploitation. Children also have the right to be heard and to be involved and consulted in matters that concern them.
- **Families and communities:** Measures that support parents, teachers, healthworkers and other members in the local community to provide children with care, love and respect is the best way to contribute to their health, development, and safety.
- **Local and national authorities:** Local and national authorities have the primary responsibility to put in place structures to prevent, protect and take care of the recovery of abused children.

Scope of this policy

This policy applies to all Nutrition International staff, including all implementing partners, Board members, contractors, visitors and volunteers involved in the work of Nutrition International.

What we will do

1. Raise awareness amongst all staff and implementing partners

All NI staff and partners have a duty to safeguard children they come into contact with through the course of their work. This will be achieved by:

- 1.1 Training for staff:** NI will provide staff with the appropriate level of training and/or learning opportunities to recognize, identify and respond to signs of abuse, neglect and other child safeguarding concerns encountered in our programs. NI will also ensure that all staff understand their roles and responsibilities with respect to child safeguarding and what they should and shouldn't do when working with or around children.
- 1.2 Awareness raising for partners:** NI will build the awareness of partner organizations so that they understand their responsibilities according to this policy and in order to minimize the risk NI's programs pose to children's safety.

2. Minimize the risk our programs pose to children

Nutrition International is committed to the promotion of a protective environment for children we work with and will seek to prevent violence, abuse and exploitation of children. This will be done through:

- 2.1 Leadership:** NI's Executive Management Committee will ensure appropriate child safeguarding skills, oversight, and accountability are built into the roles and responsibilities of nominated staff at different levels.
- 2.2 Open communication:** NI will encourage open discussion of child safeguarding issues within teams and programs.
- 2.3 Situation analysis:** NI will assess each program to identify situations that might put children at risk and develop mitigation strategies.
- 2.4 Children's participation:** One of the best ways to safeguard children is to empower them to protect themselves. Age-appropriate mechanisms will be in place to ensure children's opinions are sought, their voice is heard and that they are treated with dignity and respect.
- 2.5 Safe recruitment:** NI reserves the right not to employ any personnel that pose a risk to the safety of children and will take active measures to prevent this from happening.
- 2.6 Considered use of public communications:** NI will put in place measures to ensure its public presence (electronic and in print) does not inadvertently put children at risk through the unintended use of digital images or of other communications material.

3. Put in place a reporting mechanism and ensure appropriate follow-up

NI will ensure that incidents or concerns of child abuse are reported internally and passed to the relevant agency or authority as appropriate. In addition NI commits to:

- 3.1 Timely reporting and response:** All suspicions and allegations of abuse will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately, including formal reporting to official authorities when appropriate. Support will be provided to children who are the subject of reports.
- 3.2 Accurate and confidential records:** Confidential, detailed and accurate records of all child safeguarding concerns will be maintained and securely stored.
- 3.3 Complaints mechanism:** A complaints mechanism will be set up for staff or partners to make confidential reports.
- 3.4 Protection for whistleblowers:** Provisions to support the welfare of the individual(s) who raise or disclose concern(s) will be put in place.

Poor practice

Nutrition International takes poor practice seriously and deems it unacceptable.

Examples of poor practice include – but are not limited to:

- When insufficient care is taken to prevent harm;
- Allowing abusive or concerning practices to go unreported;
- Placing children or young people in potentially compromising and uncomfortable situations with adults, including the inappropriate use of technology/social media;
- Ignoring health and safety guidelines;
- Failing to adhere to Nutrition International policies for staff conduct at work;
- Knowingly make false claims related to this policy against another staff member.

The judgement about whether an incident is one of child abuse or poor practice may not be able to be made at the point of reporting, but will be made after investigation and the collection of relevant information. All poor practice concerns will be dealt with initially by the Country Director, Regional Director, and the regional and global child safeguarding focal points.

All reported cases of poor practice in relation to this policy will be dealt with according to NI's disciplinary processes.

Compliance

Non-compliance with the child safeguarding policy will lead to disciplinary proceedings, with sanctions including suspension or termination of arrangements.

The Executive Committee will be notified of all reported incidents.

Annex 1: Relevant laws and endorsements

Canadian federal, provincial and territorial laws protecting children from abuse, violence and harm and those outlining measures for reporting known or alleged cases of abuse.

Applicable laws in the countries where Nutrition International operates programs, services and/or delegations.

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and other applicable international treaties, laws and conventions.

Nutrition International is committed to ensuring children's right to protection, in line with UNCRC.

The following articles are particularly significant:

Article 19 – Protection from all forms of violence

Article 32 – Child labour

Article 33 – Drug abuse

Article 34 – Sexual exploitation

Article 35 – Abduction, sale and trafficking

Article 36 – Other forms of exploitation

Article 39 – Rehabilitation of child victims

Further information at https://www.unicef.org/crc/files/Rights_overview.pdf

Additionally, the Government of Canada endorses a number of international efforts to protect children from sexual exploitation, including:

- Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography that requires countries to undertake measures to prevent all forms of sexual exploitation of children;
- G8 Strategy to Protect Children from Sexual Exploitation on the Internet;
- International Labour Organization's Convention concerning the Prohibition and Immediate Action for the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labour; and
- Council of Europe Convention on Cybercrime.

Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, of Australia (DFAT) funded projects

The following applies as directed by the DFAT Child Protection Policy, 2017:

It is mandatory for all DFAT staff and partners to report immediately any suspected or alleged case of child exploitation, abuse or policy non-compliance by anyone within scope of the policy in connection with official duties or business. All reports should be made to childwelfare@dfat.gov.au and to the relevant DFAT Agreement Manager.

Annex 2: Definitions

Definitions of abuse

Child abuse includes physical, emotional and sexual abuse, child labour and/or neglect. It also addresses a pattern of abuse and risks of harm.

Physical abuse is any deliberate physical force or action, by a parent or caregiver, which results, or could result, in injury to a child. It can include bruising, cutting, punching, slapping, beating, shaking, burning, biting or throwing a child. Using belts, sticks or other objects to punish a child can cause serious harm, and is also considered abuse.

Neglect occurs when a caregiver fails to provide basic needs such as adequate food, sleep, safety, education, clothing or medical treatment. It also includes leaving a child alone or failing to provide adequate supervision. 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.

Emotional abuse is a pattern of behaviour that attacks a child's emotional development and sense of self-worth. It includes excessive, aggressive or unreasonable demands that place expectations on a child beyond his or her capacity. Emotional abuse includes constantly criticising, teasing, belittling, insulting, rejecting, ignoring or isolating the child. It may also include exposure to domestic violence.

Sexual abuse occurs when a child is used for the sexual gratification of an adult or an older child. The child may cooperate because he or she wants to please the adult, or out of fear. It includes sexual intercourse, exposing a child's private areas, indecent telephone calls, fondling for sexual purposes, watching a child undress for sexual pleasure, and allowing/forcing a child to look at or perform in pornographic pictures (child pornography) or videos, or engage in prostitution.

Child labour is often defined as work that deprives children of their childhood, their potential and their dignity, and that is harmful to physical and mental development.

It refers to work that:

- Is mentally, physically, socially or morally dangerous and harmful to children; and
- Interferes with their schooling by:
 - Depriving them of the opportunity to attend school;
 - Obliging them to leave school prematurely; or
 - Requiring them to attempt to combine school attendance with excessively long and strenuous work.

Definitions used are taken from the Ontario Association of Children's Aid Societies (OACAS) www.oacas.org and from the International Labour Organization (ILO) <http://www.ilo.org/>.