



Queensland Child Protection Week – Lantern Project

Background:

Queensland Child Protection Week is co-ordinated by the Queensland Child Protection Week Committee and funded by the Department of Child Safety, Youth and Women. Queensland Child Protection Week's sponsors include Department of Health, Department of Education, Queensland Police Service, Queensland Family and Child Commission, KFC and Channel 7. The week is launched with an Awards ceremony recognising outstanding practice in and contribution to child protection. Child Protection Week focuses attention on **child protection being everyone's business** and ensuring that all across Queensland communities take responsibility for children being protected and experiencing well-being. This campaign runs all year long through sharing key messages of child protection, culminating in an action packed week of media and community events. Over 100 events will take place across Queensland on Child Protection Week - the first week of September each year. To find out more please go to the Queensland Child Protection Week website: <https://childprotectionweek.org.au/>

Key Messages:

Child protection is everyone's business. The responsibility lies with adults in keeping children safe from harm and assisting their holistic wellbeing. All members of our families and communities need to play a part in ensuring children are nurtured, protected and safe.

Children and young people need to be safe and they also need to experience wellbeing. **Parents and loved ones spending time with children and young people assists them in feeling connected and cared for. Turn off your devices each day to enjoy quality time.**

In keeping children and young people safe it is important to:

Listen to children and young people.

This is the number 1 indicator in assisting their safety and well-being. Whatever children and young people speak about, experiencing an attentive adult or adults and/or caring person/s is essential. Not being heard when they speak about abuse or trauma harms children and young people.

Know that Children and young people are honest.

They are unlikely to lie about abuse. They are more likely to stay quiet about abuse or harm than to speak up (especially if they know their abuser). As such, sometimes observing children and young people and hearing their comments that may not be 'direct disclosures' but indicate something is not OK, is really important.

Understand the impact of domestic and family violence on children and young people.

Seeing or directly experiencing domestic and family violence harms children and young people. Domestic and family violence has a significant impact on children and young people even when they are not personally physically or sexually abused. The impact on children and young people witnessing this behaviour and feeling the fear is enormous. We are only now starting to understand the widespread impacts of domestic violence on children and young people. We are also starting to understand through research, the link between domestic violence and child abuse that is both physical, sexual and emotional.

Understand, if something doesn't feel right, trust yourself.

Trust yourself and your instincts and teach children and young people to do the same. Research shows that after most abuse situations either the victim or those around them noted that 'something didn't feel right'. Teaching all in our community to trust themselves and their instincts or 'gut feelings' as many describe these feelings, is essential. If you have an instinct about a person or situation, observe and endeavour to find out more information.

Know that words can harm.

Mean or cruel words harm children and young people. If cruel comments are made by friends or family members or even strangers all these comments harm a growing person who is coming to know and understand themselves. Verbal cruelty is never OK. This is a major part of bullying in our communities that needs to be identified and ceased. Teaching understanding of each other's differences, patience for those who make mistakes whilst also assisting their learning through taking responsibility for errors as well as offering generosity towards those who struggle due to complex circumstances in their lives is all part of the solution.

To find out more about **Queensland Child Protection Week** or to access our resources please visit our website: <https://childprotectionweek.org.au/>

