



## **Early Years Child Protection Programme**

### **Important Information for Early Years Services**

#### **Commencement of Remaining Provisions of the Children First Act 2015**

##### **Children First Act, 2015 – Commencement of Remaining Provisions**

On 2nd October 2017 Minister Katherine Zappone T.D., Minister for Children and Youth Affairs, announced that the remaining provisions of the Children First Act, 2015 will commence on 11th December 2017.

The Act will impose statutory obligations on key professionals to report child protection concerns over a certain threshold to Tusla and on providers of relevant services to children to carry out a comprehensive risk assessment of their services and develop a Child Safeguarding Statement.

The Act includes provisions to:

- introduce mandatory reporting of child abuse
- place a legal obligation on organisations providing services to children to prepare and publish a Child Safeguarding Statement.

##### **Early Years Services and the Children First Act, 2015**

- All persons carrying on or running a registered early years service and all who are employed in them as childcare staff are Mandated Persons under the Act and will acquire new legal obligations on Dec 11<sup>th</sup>, 2017.
- Registered early years services who employ at least one other person will have a legal obligation to publish a Child Safeguarding Statement. Services will have 3 months from that date to comply with their obligations in relation to publishing a Child Safeguarding Statement.

## Revised Children First Guidance

- The revised Children First Guidance has been published and it includes the provisions of the Children First Act, 2015 it will come into operation on December 11<sup>th</sup>, 2017.
- Early years services will be provided with a copy of the new guidance over the coming months. The Guidance can be downloaded here:  
<http://www.tusla.ie/children-first/children-first-2017/>

## Key Dates

Date	Information
December 11 <sup>th</sup> , 2017	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Mandated Persons acquire new legal obligations to report child abuse</li><li>- Relevant services are required to have a Child Safeguarding Statement</li></ul>
December 11 <sup>th</sup> , 2017	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Revised Children First Guide &amp; other support documentation comes into operation.</li></ul>
March 11 <sup>th</sup> , 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Existing relevant services have until this date to publish their Child Safeguarding Statement.</li></ul>

## More information

The Early Years Child Protection programme was established to support the implementation of *Children First* in the early years sector through delivery of a national child protection training plan and child protection policy supports. The Programme is currently updating its materials and developing support documentation. Regional information sessions will be held in partnership with Tusla on the new legal obligations and will be open to all early years services.

In the meantime, services are encouraged to familiarise themselves with the new Children First Guidance and other support documents published by Tusla, they include a Child Protection Reporter's guide and a Guide to developing and Child Safe Guarding Statement all of which can be accessed here: <http://www.tusla.ie/children-first/children-first-2017/>.