

CONSENTING FOR SERVICES: CHILD CLIENTS

New Zealand law requires every client referred to Safe Network to agree to receiving services, based on an understanding of what is involved. This is called “**informed consent**”, and we need that before we start working with any client, including children.

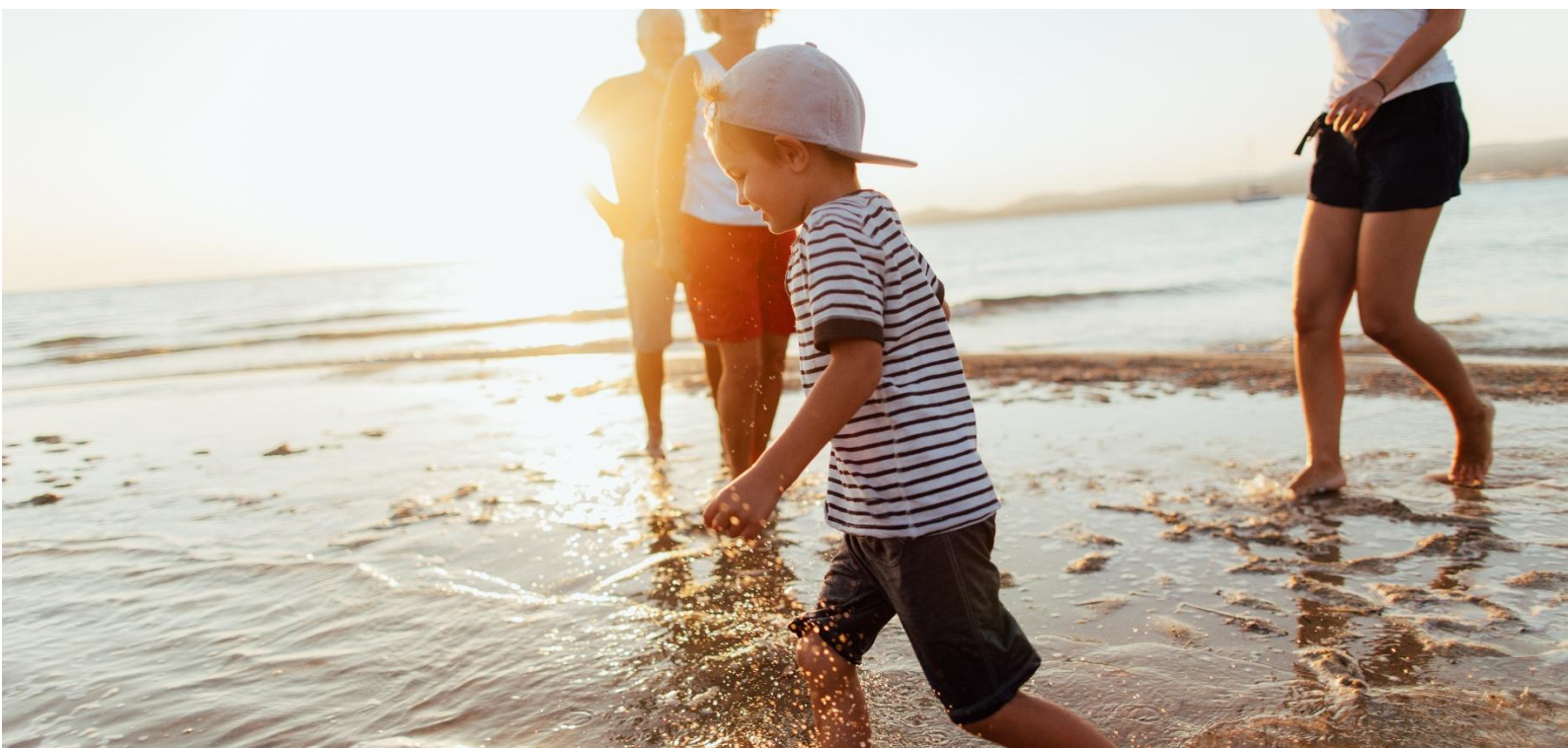
This information sheet explains your child’s rights, Safe Network’s policies around informed consent and how we apply these for child clients (12 years old and younger).

WHAT IS INFORMED CONSENT?

Informed consent is where someone receiving a service is provided with enough information to:

- Understand what is involved
- Understand the potential benefits and risks from receiving our services
- Understand what their options are, including the option to decline services
- Make a voluntary decision to participate in our services.

Children are generally unable to make their own informed decision because they can’t fully understand what is involved in our services and what their options are. Therefore, informed consent must be provided by someone who can act on their behalf. This information sheet explains how Safe Network manages obtaining informed consent for child clients.



OUR APPROACH TO INFORMED CONSENT

1. We presume that children are not able (“**competent**”) to give informed consent for themselves. Because of this, we require an appropriate adult to provide consent on behalf of a child referred to our services.
2. Parents and caregivers do not have a legal right to consent on behalf of a child. When they do provide consent, they are only doing so on behalf of the child and they must act in the child’s best interests.
3. We believe that the risks from taking part in our services are negligible. If your child has been recommended for our services, we believe it is in their best interests to do so.
4. You have the right to receive all the information necessary for making an informed choice about what services your child will receive from Safe Network. We cannot proceed with providing services without consent.
5. You are entitled to ask questions, seek clarification, consult with others, receive further information and ask for more time prior to making a decision.
6. There is always the option to decline our services, even if attendance at Safe Network is recommended by Oranga Tamariki.
7. While consent may be verbal or in writing, we require written consent before we start.
8. After we have explained our services to you, you will have up to a week to consider your options, consult with others and ask any follow-up questions. We may withdraw the offer of services after a week if consent has not yet been provided.



Obtaining consent on behalf of a child

9. In the first instance, we will seek consent from a parent or legal guardian where they are contactable, respond to our request for consent and it is not considered detrimental to the child's welfare for them to be engaged in consenting on their behalf.
10. Where we are unable to obtain consent from a parent or legal guardian, or it is inappropriate to do so, we will seek consent from a caregiver or another person who has an interest in the child's welfare. Caregiver consent may be obtained and relied upon for clients in whaangai placements.

We only require the consent of one parent or legal guardian, irrespective of whether or not there are Court orders in place relating to joint parenting or guardianship. Such court orders are a private matter between those involved and are for the parties concerned to resolve between themselves and the Court. Safe Network will continue to rely on the consent of one parent or guardian until such time as the Court may order otherwise.



Limitation of consent

11. While there is the right to limit consent or only provide partial consent for the services recommended, we are not required to agree to this.
12. We may decline to work with your child where we believe that a limited consent undermines the quality of the service we can provide them or it is impractical to apply.

Withdrawal of consent

13. Consent may be withdrawn or amended at any point in time, including after services start. Withdrawal of consent may be provided verbally or in writing.
14. If consent is withdrawn, we will immediately stop providing services to your child. We will ask for written confirmation that consent is withdrawn if not already provided.
15. If your child is under a Care and Protection order, we will inform their Oranga Tamariki social worker that you have withdrawn your consent.



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