Bullying, Harassment, and Respect in the Workplace Meeting Kit



WHAT’S AT STAKE

Respect in the workplace is more than politeness. In childcare settings, it directly affects safety, teamwork, and the emotional environment children experience every day. Bullying or harassment breaks down trust and increases stress. Over time, it can cause staff to stay silent about problems or safety concerns. A respectful workplace helps teams work together effectively and creates a calm, stable environment where children feel secure.

WHAT’S THE DANGER

Bullying and harassment often develop gradually and may be minimized or ignored until real harm occurs.

Cumulative Harm

Workplace bullying is often ongoing rather than a single incident. Repeated negative behaviours such as exclusion, criticism, or disrespect can build over time and affect how staff feel and perform at work.

Psychological Injury

Bullying and harassment can contribute to anxiety, stress, sleep problems, and burnout. These impacts reduce focus, patience, and emotional availability, which are essential for working safely and effectively with children.

Team Breakdown

When bullying goes unresolved, teamwork suffers. Staff may avoid communication, leave the workplace, or take more sick time. In childcare settings, this instability affects both staff wellbeing, and the consistency children depend on.

Impact on Wellbeing

Workers who experience harassment are more likely to report poor mental health and dissatisfaction at work. This can create an unhealthy environment that affects the entire team.

HOW TO PROTECT YOURSELF

Preventing bullying and harassment starts with recognizing how harmful behaviour appears and taking clear action when it occurs.

How Bullying and Harassment Show Up

Harmful behaviour is not always obvious. It can appear openly or through subtle patterns that build over time.

Common Forms of Harmful Behaviour Include:

- Yelling, insults, threats, or public criticism
- Sarcasm, eyerolling, exclusion from conversations, or dismissive tone
- Gossip or withholding important information from coworkers
- Harassing messages through texts, emails, or social media
- Misuse of authority or power that makes others feel unable to speak up

How to Protect Yourself and Your Team

Set Clear Expectations

Everyone should understand what respectful behaviour looks like. This includes how feedback is given, how stress is managed, and how disagreements are handled.

Address Issues Early

Small problems are easier to resolve than ongoing patterns. Speaking up early can prevent conflict from escalating.

Document Objectively

If harmful behaviour occurs, record dates, times, what was said or done, and who was present. Focus on facts rather than opinions.

Use Reporting Processes

Reporting concerns is about accountability and workplace safety. Use the organization’s reporting procedures so issues can be addressed appropriately.

Support Each Other

Coworkers play an important role in maintaining respectful workplaces. When people speak up or support one another, harmful behaviour is less likely to continue.

FINAL WORD

Respect is not optional in childcare workplaces. It is a foundational safety practice. When staff feel respected and supported, they communicate better, make safer decisions, and provide higher-quality care. A respectful workplace protects everyone.