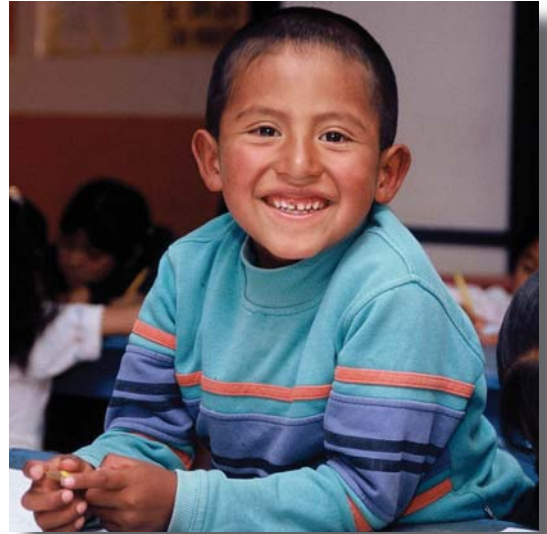


## What is meant by child protection?

There are different definitions of 'child protection' with some describing child protection very broadly as incorporating every type of adverse experience for children while other definitions are very narrow and only deal with direct harm caused to children by others.

ChildFund understands child protection as - preventing and responding to violence, exploitation and abuse against children.

Child protection encompasses raising of awareness about potential threats to children and taking action to ensure children are living in a protective environment, free from harm, injury and abuse, where they can develop and reach their full potential. It also involves protecting the fundamental rights of children as outlined in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC).



## What are some of the common factors that protect children, and that present risks to children?

A protective environment for children is created by:



- A caring family or other caregivers and a network of supportive community relationships
- Laws, that are enforced, that provide protection from exploitation and abuse
- Attitudes, customs, traditions and practices that respect children's rights; opposition to practices that are harmful to children
- Awareness of children's needs and rights; acceptance by parents, community members and governments of their responsibilities as duty-bearers
- Mechanisms to monitor and report violence, abuse and neglect against children as well as the necessary human and financial resources to respond to such issues when they arise
- Promotion of children's right to participation - listening and responding to their concerns
- Children equipped with the appropriate life skills and knowledge to understand the risks they face and how to protect themselves from harm
- Accessible services for recovery and reintegration when children have experienced trauma and abuse

Factors that present risks to children include:

- Poverty which prevents children from enjoying basic rights such as adequate food, clothing, shelter, healthcare and education. Poverty contributes to poor health status, illiteracy and vulnerability to forms of exploitation such as child labour, child prostitution and early marriage
- Sexual abuse and exploitation
- Child trafficking
- Child labour
- Substance abuse
- Exposure to HIV and AIDS
- Harmful traditional practices such as female genital mutilation
- Humanitarian emergencies, war and natural disasters present extreme risk for children who are most severely impacted in these circumstances

## How does ChildFund strengthen child protection in its development work?

ChildFund's program model places particular value on the rights and well-being of children and young people. The UNCRC is a key reference point for ChildFund's work. The Convention defines the rights of children to protection, access to their parents, health, education and leisure time. ChildFund programs aim to inform children, community leaders and others about these rights and how to protect children from harm.



ChildFund's development approach aims to address the holistic needs of children through the delivery of sustainable programs that address children's physical, emotional, social and intellectual well-being and to protect and advance their fundamental rights.

ChildFund aims to promote awareness at all levels - from the community to national and international levels - about the issues that make children vulnerable. ChildFund works with partners and communities to design, implement and monitor interventions that promote children's well-being, create an environment where they can develop fully, and protect them from exploitation and abuse.

ChildFund strives to ensure its development interventions do not inadvertently put children at risk. The safety and security of children is a fundamental consideration in the design of all interventions. When involving children in advocacy activity careful consideration is given to the potential risks of such action.

ChildFund policies and procedures on child protection clearly articulate the responsibilities of staff and supporters and there is continuous education of staff, partners and supporters on child protection issues. ChildFund has established procedures for a range of matters including screening of staff, supervision of supporter visits and responding to allegations of child abuse in a timely and appropriate manner.

## How does ChildFund ensure respect for children's privacy?

Children's addresses are never shared with supporters in order to maintain their privacy and protection. Child Information Folders are kept in a secure location and child information is restricted to ChildFund staff who require access to the information as part of their responsibilities. At all times staff are required to adhere to ChildFund's Child Protection Policy and Privacy Policy.

All correspondence between sponsors and children is screened to ensure there is no inappropriate content. When a supporter visits a child, they meet the child in the project office or a central community location. They are never taken to the child's home and are always accompanied by a local staff person.

Photography of children must comply with the ChildFund communications guidelines requiring that photos present children in a respectful way, are taken with the consent of the child and/or parent and don't contain any images or information that identify the child's address. All child photos and profiles are destroyed when no longer in use.

