



Early Learning Photographers Australia



CHILD SAFETY FRAMEWORK

- For your consideration

Early Learning Photographers Australia
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“A NATIONAL BENCHMARK FOR SAFE, PROFESSIONAL EARLY LEARNING PHOTOGRAPHY.”

The ELPA Safety Framework sets minimum industry-wide standards for consent, data security, child safety, and professional conduct.

It ensures every photographer operating in Australian early-learning settings meets the highest standards of safety, transparency, and professionalism.

OUR MISSION

We exist to ensure every child photographed in early learning settings is safe, respected, and cared for by professionals who uphold verified, measurable standards.

Families and centres can have complete confidence in certified photographers who prioritise:

- **Child safety**
- **Privacy protection**
- **Professional practice**



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CHILDCARE PHOTOGRAPHY SAFETY FRAMEWORK V3.2

Drafted by: Early Learning Photographers Australia (ELPA)

Definition:

This Framework establishes a set of minimum industry-wide standards for consent, data security, child safety, equipment, and professional conduct for commercial childcare photographers operating across Australia. All participating businesses commit to adhere to the standards and become certified under this Framework.

1. Mission Statement

To ensure every child photographed in early learning settings is safe, respected, and cared for by professionals who meet the highest standards of conduct. We exist to give Australian families and childcare centres complete confidence in certified photographers through rigorous, verifiable requirements in child safety, privacy protection, and professional practice. When photography is done right, childhood memories are preserved safely and joyfully.

2. Purpose & Scope

Purpose:

To provide childcare centres and early-learning providers with clear assurance that photographers engaged under this Framework meet rigorous safety, privacy and professional standards.

- ▶ To unify the commercial childcare photography industry under one recognised code, giving us a voice and credibility.
- ▶ To protect children, respect families, and safeguard businesses.

Scope:

Applies to all **professional photography services** delivered in early-learning and **childcare centre settings** (including long day care, preschool, and kindergarten programs) where children are photographed for families, providing them with memories of their child at that age and in that environment among their peers.



3. DEFINITIONS & REGULATORY CONTEXT

To operate safely and professionally within Australian Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) settings, photographers must understand the key organisations, frameworks and legal structures that govern image-taking in childcare environments.

NQF — National Quality Framework: Australia's national system for regulating early childhood education and care. It sets legal duties for services, including child safety, supervision and information handling. More information: <https://www.education.gov.au/early-childhood/about/quality-and-safety/national-quality-framework>

National Law & National Regulations: The enforceable legislation under the NQF. These laws outline what centres must do to keep children safe — including supervision and privacy responsibilities when photography occurs.

ACECQA — Australian Children's Education & Care Quality Authority: The independent national authority. ACECQA guides and supports the NQF, promotes consistent practice, and publishes the National Model Code: Taking Images and Videos of Children in ECEC. <https://www.acecqa.gov.au/>

Regulatory Authorities — “The Education Department” in each state: These are the on-the-ground regulators who license and assess centres, investigate issues, and enforce the law.

Examples: VIC Department of Education, NSW Department of Education Early Childhood Directorate.

EYLF V2.0 — Early Years Learning Framework:

The nationally approved learning framework for children from birth to school age.

Approved by all Australian Governments under the NQF and supported by ACECQA.

Official document (PDF): <https://www.acecqa.gov.au/sites/default/files/2023-01/EYLF-2022-V2.0.pdf>

National Model Code: Australia's official standards for photography/videography in early childhood settings.

It is voluntary while governments consider legislative changes, but centres must demonstrate alignment for compliance and child-safety reasons.

Code (PDF): <https://www.acecqa.gov.au/sites/default/files/2024-07/National%20Model%20Code%20Taking%20Images%20and%20Videos.pdf>

Guidelines (PDF): <https://www.acecqa.gov.au/sites/default/files/2024-07/Guidelines%20for%20the%20National%20Model%20Code%20Taking%20Images%20and%20Videos.pdf>

ECEC — Early Childhood Education and Care

A sector term that includes long day care (childcare centres), kindergarten/preschool, occasional care and some OSHC services.

ELPA - Early Learning Photographers Australia



Early Learning Photographers Australia

3.1 GLOSSARY

Photographer

Includes any employee, contractor, or representative of a company engaged to supply photographic services.

Non-Consented Child

A child whose parent or guardian has not provided permission for photography.

Roles

Photography Provider

The business engaged to deliver photography services within an ECEC service.

Photographer

A person working on behalf of the photography provider who captures or handles children's images and holds a valid Working With Children Check.

ECEC Service

An Early Childhood Education and Care service such as long day care, preschool or kindergarten.

Third-Party Service Provider

Any external company or personnel contracted to support editing, printing, processing, hosting, or delivery of children's images under this Framework.

Image Handling & Privacy

Image Handling

The full lifecycle of photo files from capture to secure delivery and final deletion or retention.

Image Retention

The length of time a business keeps image files for the purpose of completing orders and supporting re-orders, as documented in its retention policy.

Photography Types

Individual Portrait

Photos taken of one child alone with no other children visible in the frame.

Sibling Portrait

Photos taken of children who are closely connected (e.g., siblings, cousins, or family-approved friends). Participation requires recorded consent from the parents or guardians of every child included in the photo.

Class (Group) Photo

A class or room photo where all participating children are photographed together at the same time. Educators belonging to the group may also be included.

Consent Authority: The photography provider.

Collage (Composite) Group Photo

A class or room photo created by combining individual portraits into one composite image. Only children with recorded commercial photography consent appear in the collage. Educators belonging to the group may also be included.

Consent Authority: The photography provider.



4. CORE PRINCIPLES

Why does this matter for photographers?

Childcare photographers must follow the same safety expectations as the centre does — because you are participating in the service environment and photographing children under their duty of care.

Child Safety First: Every activity prioritises the physical, emotional, cultural and digital safety of children.

Transparency & Consent: Parents/families must give informed consent, and centres must be given information on who has provided consent for individual and class photos.

Data Protection & Privacy: All online galleries must meet Australian Privacy Principles and PCI DSS requirements, including AES-256 encryption for data at rest and in transit, multi-factor or role-based access controls, secure payment gateways, and time-bound deletion of personal data. (more detail in section 5.4)

Collaboration, Not Confrontation: We work in partnership with services to maintain a child-safe environment.

4.1 CULTURAL SAFETY & INCLUSION

ELPA recognises Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the Traditional Custodians of the lands on which Early Childhood Education and Care services operate across Australia. We acknowledge their enduring connection to land, water, sky, culture and community.

ELPA members commit to creating culturally safe, respectful and inclusive environments for all children and families.

This includes:

- Respecting and valuing cultural identity, language and heritage.
- Ensuring photography practices are inclusive and sensitive to cultural, religious and family preferences.
- Following all centre-specific cultural protocols.
- Reflecting the diversity of the communities they serve in imagery and communication.
- Maintaining a workplace culture free from discrimination, racism or bias.
- Member Responsibilities

ELPA Members must:

- Consult respectfully with centres and families regarding cultural considerations where required.
- Respond appropriately to cultural safety concerns.
- Operate in a manner consistent with the National Quality Framework and inclusive practice principles within ECEC settings.

Continuous Improvement

ELPA recognises cultural safety as an evolving practice. Members are expected to reflect, learn and adapt as standards and community expectations develop.

4.2 ALIGNMENT WITH THE UNITED NATIONS CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD

Key Child Rights Reflected in the ELPA Framework

1. Best Interests of the Child

CRC Article 3

The best interests of the child must be a primary consideration in all actions concerning children.

How ELPA Supports This

The ELPA framework requires that:

- Child safety is prioritised over photography outcomes
- Children are never pressured to participate
- Photography stops immediately if a child becomes distressed
- Educators maintain supervision at all times

Photography must never compromise the wellbeing of a child.

2. Protection from Harm

CRC Article 19

Children have the right to be protected from harm, abuse and exploitation.

How ELPA Supports This

ELPA requires:

- All photographers hold a valid Working With Children Check
- Clear child-safe behaviour standards
- No unsupervised interaction between photographers and children
- Photography conducted within educator visibility

These safeguards reduce risk and ensure children remain protected within the service environment.



3. Right to Privacy

CRC Article 16

Children have the right to privacy, including protection of personal information.

How ELPA Supports This

The framework includes strict privacy protections:

- Explicit parental consent before any photography
- Secure storage and encrypted image systems
- Password-protected galleries
- Controlled access to images
- Parent rights to request deletion of images

These measures ensure children's images are treated as sensitive personal data.

4. Respect for the Child's Dignity

CRC Article 13

Children have the right to express themselves and to be treated with dignity and respect.

How ELPA Supports This

Photographers must:

- work patiently and respectfully with children
- avoid forcing participation
- create a comfortable environment
- respect cultural or family preferences regarding photography

Children's emotional wellbeing must always take priority.

5. Cultural Identity and Respect

CRC Article 30

Children have the right to enjoy their own culture, religion and language.

How ELPA Supports This

The framework requires photographers to follow:

- the centre's cultural protocols
- guidance from educators regarding cultural sensitivities
- family requests related to cultural identity or beliefs

This ensures photography practices respect the diversity of Australian families.

ELPA Commitment

By aligning with the principles of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, ELPA ensures that early learning photography supports the rights of children to:

- safety
- dignity
- privacy
- cultural respect
- positive childhood experiences

Photography in early learning settings should preserve childhood memories without compromising the rights or wellbeing of the child.

5. COMPLIANCE REQUIREMENTS (FOR PHOTOGRAPHERS / BUSINESSES)

5.0 ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

| Area | ECEC Service Responsibility | Photography Provider Responsibility |
|--------------------------|--|---|
| Child Supervision | Maintains full supervision of children at all times | Never responsible for supervision |
| Consent Verification | Verifies consent for Traditional Group Photos; identifies non-consented children | Confirm commercial consent for Individual, Sibling and Group Photos |
| Participation Management | Communicates opt-out arrangements to families | Provides clear opt-out options for Collage Photos |
| Child-Safe Protocols | Communicates any centre-specific rules and cultural protocols | Follows all directions given by educators |
| Environment Readiness | Ensures photography area is safe and appropriate | Sets up equipment safely and professionally |
| Data and Image Security | N/A | Ensures full compliance with secure handling and privacy requirements |
| Complaints/Escalations | Raises concerns to photography provider or ELPA if required | Responds promptly; remediation required for ELPA compliance |

5.1 REGISTRATION & VERIFICATION

Businesses listed as Early Learning Photographers Australia (ELPA) Compliant agree to:

- Hold an active ABN
- Maintain public liability insurance of at least AUD \$10 million
- Ensure all personnel entering an ECEC service hold a valid Working With Children Check (or state/territory equivalent)}
- Maintain a Child Safe Policy aligned to the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations

Photographers listed as ELPA Compliant agree to follow the Early Learning Photographers Australia (ELPA) Safety Framework whenever providing services in ECEC environments. The Framework establishes shared expectations for safe, professional and respectful photography aligned to ACECQA's National Model Code.



Equipment & Device Expectations

- Professional equipment or company devices must be used for all photography and image handling inside ECEC environments
- Personal phones/devices must not be used for capturing or storing images/videos of children
- if a Photographer needs to use a personal device (e.g. urgent personal call), should take place away from children's learning spaces

Collaboration & Continuous Improvement

ELPA membership is voluntary. If a concern is raised by an ECEC service, ELPA will work collaboratively with the member to review and resolve the issue. Where a concern cannot be resolved, ELPA may remove the member from the ELPA Compliant list.

Clarifying Responsibilities

ELPA Compliant status supports safe practice but it does not replace a service's regulatory obligations under the NQF.

Example:

A photographer follows all ELPA expectations while capturing portraits. A child nearby requires supervision. The centre remains responsible for supervision at all times, even when photography is occurring.

5.2 CONSENT PROCESS

Informed consent means parents or guardians clearly understand what they are agreeing to before any photography occurs.

This includes:

1. What types of photos will be taken (individual, siblings, class/group).
2. How the images will be used (viewing gallery, print products, internal centre records, etc.).
3. Who will have access to the images and for how long.

Consent must be:

1. Specific – separate choices for individual and group images
2. Voluntary – no pressure or assumptions
3. Revocable – families can change their mind anytime before images are published/used
4. Securely recorded – via the centre or the photographer's secure digital system
5. Only consented children may appear in any photo sessions.
6. Photographers offering traditional or collage-style group photos must collect explicit consent from parents during registration for their child to appear in the group image.
7. Parents must be clearly informed about the group image process.
8. Photographers must supply centres with clear documentation on consent, participation and opt-out rights. Done by link to their terms and conditions or Check boxes in a form.

5.3 IMAGE & DATA HANDLING

Delivery

Delivery must be secure and private. If delivered online, password protection or secure login must be used. If delivered physically, products must only be provided to verified parents or guardians.

Retention

Businesses must document how long images are retained and why. Retention should only be for operational needs such as order fulfilment or re-orders. Families must be informed of the retention period in plain language.

Deletion

Parents and guardians may request deletion of their child's images at any time. Businesses must action deletion requests promptly and provide confirmation once complete.

Security

Access to images must be limited to authorised personnel only, with secure storage and regular review of data-handling practices.

5.4 WHAT ALL THESE SECURITY STANDARDS MEAN?

To ensure children's images and personal information are always protected, online galleries must meet the following industry-standard security requirements:

Australian Privacy Principles (APPs)

National rules under the Privacy Act that govern:

- how children's information and images are collected and stored
- who can access them
- how consent is managed
- how data must eventually be deleted

This ensures photography services uphold legal privacy obligations for families and centres.

Payment Card Industry Data Security Standard (PCI DSS)

Security requirements for any online payment.

- Payments handled through approved secure gateways (not by the photographer directly)
- Protects parents' credit card information from theft or fraud

Advanced Encryption Standard — 256-bit (AES-256)

Bank-grade encryption to keep data safe if it is intercepted or stolen.

- Encryption "in transit" (upload/download)
- Encryption "at rest" (stored on servers)

This ensures data cannot be read by unauthorised parties.

Individually Password-Protected Online Galleries

Each gallery is secured with its own unique password, ensuring only authorised parents can access their child's photos.

Role-Based Access Control (RBAC)

Only the right authorised people can see the data they need.

- Photography personnel access only assigned jobs
- Parents only access their own child's images
- Admin access limited to trusted senior staff

Reduces the risk of accidental or internal breaches.

Data Retention & Secure Deletion

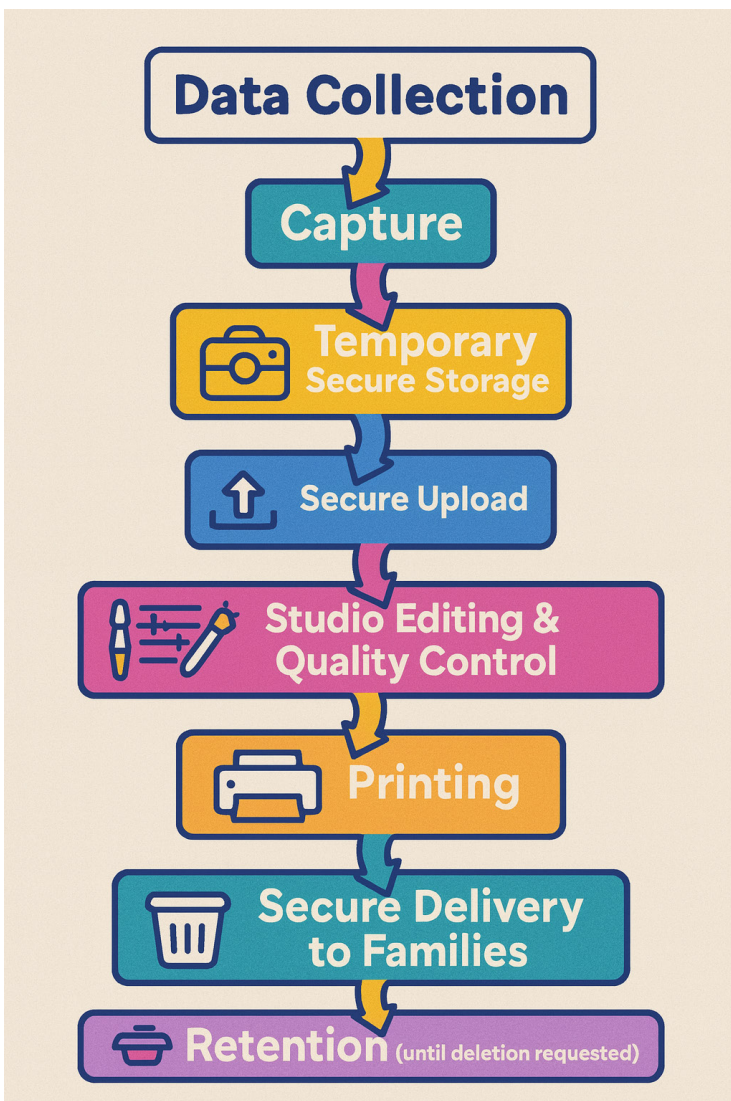
Images and related personal data may be retained for as long as the business requires to support operational or administrative purposes. Retention may include future orders or archival storage. Families are informed of this retention policy in clear language. Data is securely stored and managed to maintain confidentiality and integrity for the duration of its retention.

5.5 CENTRE ENGAGEMENT & CULTURAL PROTOCOLS

▶ The service's child-safe and cultural protocols must always be followed, as communicated by the service.

5.6 WORKFLOW

Example Workflow



Each business must document its complete image-handling workflow. From capture through editing, storage, delivery, printing, and any outsourced processes. This must be presented in a clear written process or flowchart. All providers involved (including third-party platforms, editors, printers, and storage services) must be openly disclosed. This ensures full transparency, traceability, security, and accountability at every stage where images are accessed or handled.

5.7 ENFORCEMENT

Centres may escalate unresolved concerns to ELPA for formal review by the Board. ELPA will investigate the matter, assess compliance with the Framework, and issue a resolution. Where breaches are identified, ELPA may require corrective actions, mandate additional training, or place the business under review. Continued or serious non-compliance may result in suspension or removal from ELPA membership.

