



Association for
Children with a
Disability

Statement on the death of Willow Dunn

Willow Dunn was a four year old girl with Down syndrome who lived in Queensland, she died on Saturday 23 May. Her father has been charged with her murder.

In Australia children with disability have a nearly four times higher risk of experiencing violence than their non-disabled peers.* We all need to do more to protect them.

ACD is speaking up to prevent violence towards children with disability. We are concerned that the COVID-19 situation and the changes to kindergarten and school, and the lack of face-to-face contact with therapists and family services puts children with disability at much greater risk at this time.

We are calling for action to protect children:

1. Kindergartens and schools

Kindergartens and schools to be required to call families when students have an unexplained absence of 5 days or more.

2. Child Protection services

Child Protection services to be required to escalate cases where the child has a disability, given their greater risk.

3. NDIS Quality and Safeguarding Commission

NDIS providers to be required to call participants if they have an unexplained absence of 5 days or more.

Remember, we all have a role to play in protecting children. If you see something, hear something, or if you haven't seen a child in a while, call someone. Contact the Police on 13 14 44 or call Child Protection.

Take care of yourself

Willow's experience is extremely distressing to read about and may trigger a range of emotions. If you need to talk to someone please call:

Lifeline – 13 11 14

Beyond Blue – 1300 22 4636

Men's Referral Service – 1300 766 491

Safe Steps 24/7 Family Violence Support – 1800 015 188

*Reference - <https://aifs.gov.au/cfca/publications/understanding-safeguarding-practices-children-disability-when-engaging>