



Body Piercing and Children Frequently Asked Questions for Parents

Section 104A Children and Community Services Act 2004

What age can my child have a non-intimate body piercing?

Non-intimate body piercings means piercing a part of the body including the nose, tongue, face, belly button or other skin surfaces for the purpose of inserting a bar, pin, ring, stud or similar thing.

Children under 18 years of age who want to have their body pierced must have written permission from a parent.

The only circumstances where a child does not need parent permission is for ear piercing if the child is aged 16 years or over.

Can my child have an intimate body piercing?

No.

Children under 18 years of age are not allowed to have any intimate area (genitals, anal area, perineum and nipples) of their body pierced.

A person who carries out this type of piercing on a child under the age of 18 can be fined \$18,000 and imprisoned for 18 months. It is not a defence to a charge that the child, or a parent of the child, consented to the body piercing.

What factors should I consider when deciding whether to give written consent to my child having a non-intimate body piercing?

A range of factors need to be considered when deciding whether to give consent to your child for a piercing. These include:

- What type of piercing do they want?
- What part of the body do they want pierced?
- What are their reasons for wanting the piercing?
- Is there a likelihood they will do it themselves or go somewhere unsafe?
- What are the associated health risks?
- How will the aftercare be managed?

It is recommended you discuss these with your child and explain the reasons behind your decision.

Further information regarding potential risks can be obtained by contacting:

Environmental Health Hazards Unit

Environmental Health Directorate

Department of Health

Telephone: (08) 9388 4999

Email: ehinfo@health.wa.gov.au

Website: http://www.public.health.wa.gov.au/3/1085/2/skin_penetration.pm

How do I provide written consent for my child to have a non-intimate body piercing?

You may wish to use the written consent form which is available on the Department for Child Protection's website at www.dcp.wa.gov.au or use the piercing company's own pro-forma.

You will need to specify the location on the body of the piercing you are consenting to. You do not need to specify the type of piercing. However for your own peace of mind, it would be useful to be clear about what type of piercing your child is having.

You may also wish to accompany your child to ensure they understand the risks and aftercare management of their piercing.

What if I discover that my child has undergone body piercing without my consent?

If you become aware that your child has been pierced by another person in an intimate area (genitals, anal area, perineum or nipples), please contact the Department for Child Protection immediately on (08) 9222 2555. The Department for Child Protection may need to liaise or refer the matter to the Western Australia Police if a criminal act has occurred.

If your child has had a non-intimate body piercing without your consent, please contact the piercer to confirm whether written consent was obtained. If you are still not satisfied with the response, please contact the Department for Child Protection on (08) 9222 2555.

