

foreword

Child, Youth and Family has produced the *Standards for Out of School Care and Recreation (OSCAR) Services* to ensure that before an after-school child care, holiday programmes and overnight holiday camps for which parents and caregivers receive subsidies are properly run and take place in a safe environment for children.

We developed the Standards in consultation with the OSCAR Foundation, the Ministry of Social Development and provider group representatives.

The Standards are very similar to the *Guidelines for Approval for Out of School Care and Recreation (OSCAR) services* used since 1999. The main difference is that the *Guidelines* are now *Standards* and they have been reformatted to make them easier to use.

This booklet sets out the approval process and the minimum quality standards an OSCAR service must meet.

We look forward to working with you to achieve improved outcomes for children in New Zealand.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Paula Tyler', written in a cursive style.

Paula Tyler
Chief Executive
Child, Youth and Family

contents

- Contacts 1*
- Introduction 2*
- Approval information 3*
- Overview of initial OSCAR approval process 6*
- Standards for approval and their performance measures 7*
 - Programme environment 8*
 - Programme operation 9*
 - Health and safety 10*
 - Child protection 11*
 - Programme supervision 12*
 - Emergencies 13*
 - Staff and management 14*
 - Buildings and facilities 16*
 - Record keeping 17*
 - Finance 18*
 - Camps 19*

contacts

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introduction

OSCAR programmes

These Standards for Approval have been produced by Child Youth and Family. They were introduced in 2005.

The standards have been developed in consultation with key stakeholders, The OSCAR Foundation and service providers.

OSCAR (Out of School Care and Recreation) programmes provide care and recreation before and after school and during school holidays for children aged from five to 13. Parents/caregivers whose children attend a Child, Youth and Family approved OSCAR programme may be eligible to apply for a subsidy to help with paying fees. Parents of a child getting a child disability allowance may also be eligible for a subsidy up to the age of 18 years.

Child, Youth and Family has the responsibility of encouraging, promoting and developing strong families and stronger communities so that children are safe.

There are two documents for the Standards:

- The standards document: Outlines the standards and identifies the minimum requirements for Child, Youth and Family approval.
- The provider guide and sample forms: The provider guide may be used as a resource by organisations. It takes the requirements for each of the standards and suggests ways of thinking about them. The sample forms are a resource which providers may choose to use. A programme may choose to develop its own forms. Not all sample forms are required to be used for all programmes.

Child, Youth and Family approves an OSCAR programme pursuant to the Social Security (Childcare Assistance) Regulations 2004, Part 3, sections 25–27.

Note:

You don't have to be an expert in each area. If you need more information than is set out in the standards, discuss this with the OSCAR advisor for your area who is available to assist and clarify information for you.

approval information

The approval process

This section provides an overview of the assessment process from when an Out of School Care and Recreation (OSCAR) provider first decides to apply for approval through to the assessment decision.

It is important that OSCAR providers understand clearly the approval process and the documentation required to demonstrate they can meet the standards. At the same time, providers should recognise that OSCAR services are unique. Programme content and structure vary widely and not all aspects are covered in these standards.

Purpose of approval

The standard requirements ensure that before and after school and holiday programmes for which parents and caregivers may receive subsidies are properly run and take place in a safe environment for children.

Parents/caregivers are able to apply to Work and Income for an OSCAR subsidy to assist them in paying their OSCAR fees. This is income tested. The subsidy is available for children aged 5–13 years or children up to 18 years in receipt of a disability allowance who attend an OSCAR programme which has been approved by Child, Youth and Family. The fee subsidy is administered by Work and Income.

Programmes may also be eligible for an OSCAR grant to assist in the running of the programme. The grant is administered by the Ministry of Social Development. For information regarding the grants please contact The OSCAR Foundation.

Child, Youth and Family does not approve entitlement to the subsidy or the programme grant fund.

Initial application

There are 11 standards:

- Programme environment
- Programme operation
- Health and safety
- Child protection
- Supervision
- Emergencies
- Staff
- Buildings and facilities
- Record keeping
- Finance
- Camps

You must develop written policies and procedures in each of these areas. When you're doing this, it is recommended that you work with your OSCAR advisor, who is able to provide 1–1 coaching and assistance with developing your policies and procedures.

When you have developed your policies and procedures and consider the site you will operate from meets the required standards you should make an application for an assessment

You **must** complete the **application form** and attach all required documents together with your policies and procedures and send these to your nearest Child, Youth and Family team leader.

Approval

Approval assessors, who work for Child, Youth and Family, then go through your written material to check if what you have submitted meets the standards. They will arrange to visit the site(s) you are operating from. This visit is to check:

- the programme/s facilities and equipment
- any documentation not yet actioned

Having visited, the assessor will determine if your organisation has the potential and ability to implement the policies and procedures you have submitted and that your programme will be properly run

You will be given feedback of the assessors findings at the time of the site visit.

If Child, Youth and Family wants you to do further work before your programme can be approved your assessor will tell you and **also** inform you in writing as to what is required and when this will be completed by.

Timeframes for getting your approval

Once you have submitted your application for OSCAR approval, along with your policy documentation, the assessor will begin to assess your application.

Timeframes for an approval vary. A site visit is usually made within six weeks of receiving an application. A decision regarding approval will be made in writing up to six weeks after the site visit.

Reviewing the approval

Child, Youth and Family will review your approval status by visiting each approved provider approximately every two years. The visit will be to ensure programmes are properly run and the policies and procedures have been implemented.

The approval does not expire. It will remain current until the provider relinquishes its OSCAR programme approval or the Department revokes the programmes approval.

Ceasing to operate an OSCAR programme

Sometimes providers may decide that they don't want to keep providing their OSCAR programme. If so, let Child, Youth and Family know. There is a sample of how to do this in section 3 of Provider Guide.

Suspending and/or revoking an approval

If an approved service is no longer meeting the OSCAR standards for approval and is not properly run Child, Youth and Family may suspend and/or revoke the approval, pursuant to Regulation 26 SS(CA).

This occurs when an approval assessment or an investigation shows that the way the standards are being addressed in regard to the following matters is not adequate:

- the adequacy with which the programme provides for:
 - the health and safety of the children participating
 - the care and recreation of the children participating
 - the health and safety of the staff and volunteers involved
- the competence, training and suitability of the staff and volunteers involved in the programme
- the competence of the programme's supervision
- the suitability and safety of the environment in which the programme is operating
- the competence of the provider's management (including its financial management)
- the extent of the programme's compliance with relevant enactments and bylaws
- the programme's responsiveness to applicable cultural issues.

The programme provider is able to make submissions to Child, Youth and Family before Child, Youth and Family makes a final decision. If the programme continues to not be able to demonstrate that it meets the OSCAR standards Child, Youth and Family will proceed to revoke approval and advise the programme and the Ministry of Social Development that it has done so.

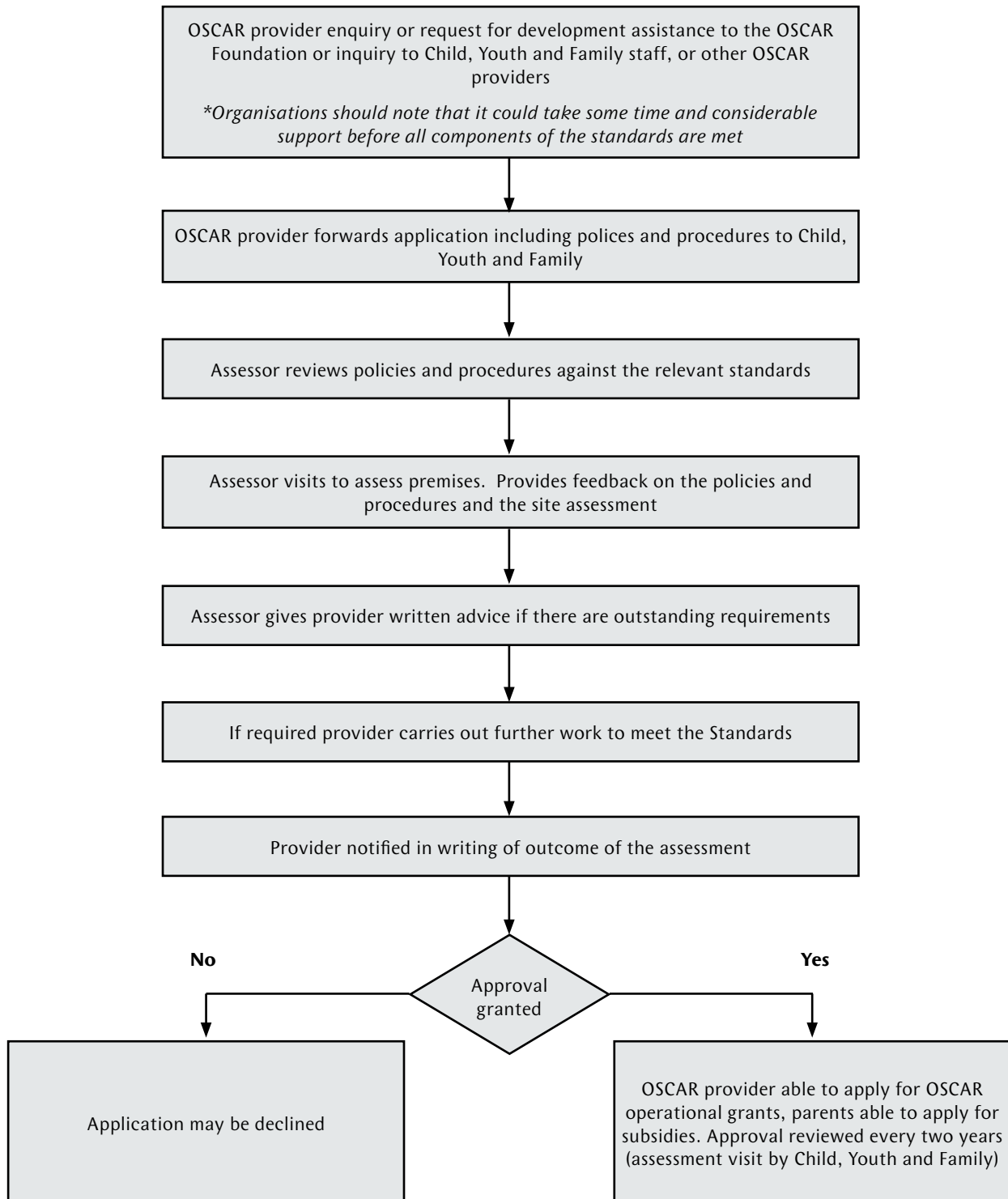
When Child, Youth and Family revokes your approval, the decision is final.

You may reapply at a later date for approval when your programme can demonstrate that it meets the minimum standards.

overview of initial OSCAR approval process

This flowchart summarises the approval process.

A copy of the OSCAR Standards and the Provider Guide to the OSCAR Standards for approval is available from your nearest Child, Youth and Family office or from The OSCAR Foundation



standards for approval and their performance measures

These standards apply to all organisations being approved by Child, Youth and Family as an OSCAR provider under Social Security (Childcare Assistance) Regulations 2004

How to understand the standards

The standards that providers must meet are presented in the same format.

Standard name

The overall standard that is to be met is shown in a shaded box at the top of each page.

The **performance measures** of each standard are immediately below. Each performance measure must be met, as it shows the way in which the overall standard is being met.

Note:

You don't have to become an expert in each area. If you need more information than is set out in the standards, discuss this with your OSCAR advisor for your area who is available to assist and clarify information for you.

programme environment

Programme environment

The programme provides a safe and positive environment with child-focused activities. There is an adequate and appropriate space for active indoor and outdoor recreation.

The organisation must be able to demonstrate to Child, Youth and Family that:

1. The written policy and procedures provide for a positive and child-focused environment.
2. There is a written policy which demonstrates the programme's responsiveness to applicable cultural issues.
3. There is a positive behaviour management plan in place with staff training provided.
4. There is a stimulating and varied programme of planned activities which is child-focused, appropriate for the children's ages and development, meets their recreational needs and allows for choice.
5. There is adequate and appropriate space for the children having regard for numbers present and the nature of the programme provided.
6. The outdoor play area is safe.
7. There is quiet space available for the children.

programme operation

Operation policies

Programme providers have written policies to show what the organisation does and written procedures to show how those policies are put into practice.

The organisation must be able to demonstrate to Child, Youth and Family that:

1. There are written policies and procedures for the way the programme operates in relation to:
 - (1) enrolment procedures
 - (2) collection of and access to children, including the signing in of children for before school, the signing out of children for after school, and the signing in and out for holiday programmes.
 - (3) children not arriving at a programme
 - (4) children not collected at the end of a programme
 - (5) transporting children
 - (6) complaints
 - (7) behaviour management
 - (8) children with special needs and/or disabilities.
2. Policies are reviewed two-yearly.
3. A copy of all policies is kept on site and is available to parents/caregivers and staff.
4. Procedures are updated as required to reflect current practice.

health and safety

Health and safety

Programme providers comply with all relevant health and safety legislation to ensure that children, staff, volunteers and visitors are protected from risk.

The organisation must be able to demonstrate to Child, Youth and Family that:

1. There is written policy to ensure programme providers are trained in health and safety procedures, comply with all relevant health and safety legislation and the centre is safe for children, staff, volunteers and visitors.
2. A written risk assessment is completed for the programme site, that identifies risks to the safety of the children and staff. A plan is developed to manage the identified risks.
3. An accident register is maintained.
4. An incident register is maintained.
5. There is evidence to ensure first aid kits are updated regularly, stored out of reach of children and taken on off-site visits.
6. There are regular recorded safety checks of facilities and equipment, including playground equipment.
7. There are written procedures to ensure all toilet facilities used during the programme at the centre and off-site are safe and appropriate for children.
8. There are written policy and procedures to ensure the food preparation area is appropriate and that food is handled safely.
9. There is a written policy for the dispensing of medicine, and written parental consent is obtained regarding the dispensing of medicines and identification of medical conditions.
10. Provision is made for all medicines to be stored out of children's reach.
11. There is a written policy which ensures that animals kept on the premises are clean, healthy and do not endanger the children's health.
12. There is a written policy that ensures animals encountered at the programme and on outings are contained and responded to in a manner that ensures the children's safety.
13. Premises are cleaned daily and cleaning equipment is accessible for the duration of the programme
14. There are written procedures to ensure there is appropriate provision for a child who is unwell.
15. A smoke-free policy is adhered to at all times when the programme is operating.
16. There is a written procedure to ensure children and staff are safe when in the sun.

child protection

Child protection

The organisation is committed to the recognition and prevention of abuse of children and young people.

The organisation must be able to demonstrate to Child, Youth and Family that:

1. In addition to the general safety policies outlined, the programme will ensure that volunteers and other adults visiting or working at the programme are well supervised and visible to staff when interacting with the children.
2. The programme has a process for dealing with allegations of abuse or situations that raise concern about the safety of a child

The process covers how the programme makes referrals under section 15 of the CYP&F Act and includes a guide on how to make referrals.

Section 15: reporting of ill-treatment or neglect of child- Any person who believes that any child has been, or is likely to be harmed (whether physically, emotionally or sexually), ill-treated, abused, neglected, or deprived may report the matter to a social worker¹ or member of Police.

3. Programme staff will act on all suspicions of child abuse in the following way:
 - all incidents and observations will be recorded
 - any suspicion that abuse is occurring will be reported to the senior staff person and/or management.
4. A minimum of two staff will supervise the programme at all times.
5. Programme staff and volunteers will be provided with a code of behaviour, which outlines appropriate behaviour, supervision, discipline, and the prevention, detection and reporting of child abuse.
6. Training is provided to all staff in recognising and responding to suspected child abuse.

¹ Social worker is defined in the CYPF Act as a Department of Child Youth and Family Services social worker.

programme supervision

Supervision

Children are supervised by a minimum of two staff and are within sight and sound of a staff member at all times.

The organisation must be able to demonstrate to Child, Youth and Family that:

1. There are written policies and procedures to ensure children are supervised by a minimum of two staff and are within sight and sound of a staff member at all times.
2. The programme supervisor/manager must be in attendance at the programme during operational hours.
3. All staff and volunteers counted for the staff/child ratio are 16 years of age or older. Staff and volunteers under age 16 must be actively supervised by a person over the age of 16 years at all times.
4. The management and overall site supervision must be carried out by an adult. For the purpose of this standard an adult is deemed by Child, Youth and Family to be a person 20 plus years.

Staff and volunteers under 16 years may be involved in the programme, but must not be solely responsible for any activity or supervision of any child.

5. Minimum ratios of staff to children are one staff member to 10 children on-site and one staff member to eight children off-site.
6. Clear attendance records are kept every day. Staff know at all times who is at the programme and where the children are.
7. Procedures are in place to ensure children do not play in a car park or alongside any unfenced boundary or near a road.
8. A written risk assessment to determine the appropriate child:staff ratio will be completed prior to any off-site excursion and prior to any activity involving water.

Note:

- The staffing requirement for a particular activity will be determined by the element of risk involved in an activity. Some activities eg. water sports, camps, outdoor activities or climbing require specific skills and higher levels of maturity and experience and perhaps specific requirements in relation to outdoor safety and health.
- Near water the child staff ratio may be lower than that detailed above. Providers will be required to complete and document a written risk assessment to determine the appropriate ratio based on the needs of the children in their care.
- Programme management must ensure that the number of assistants under 16 years old who will be requiring supervision from older staff does not negatively impact on the programmes ability to adequately supervise the children on the programme.

emergencies

Emergencies

All staff and volunteers are trained in fire, earthquake drills and other emergency procedures

The building owner is responsible for developing a fire evacuation scheme or procedure which must be used by the OSCAR provider. OSCAR providers should not develop their own separate evacuation plan and should comply with the buildings procedure or scheme when carrying out practice drills.

The OSCAR provider must show a clear understanding and compliance with the applicable evacuation scheme or procedure established by the building owner.

1. There are written policies and procedures for fire, earthquake and other emergencies.
2. All staff are trained in the emergency procedures
3. Emergency procedures are displayed clearly and drills are recorded and carried out
 - (1) at least once a term for before and after school programmes
 - (2) at least once a fortnight during a holiday programme
4. An evacuation plan is in place to ensure :
 - (1) everyone leaves the area of danger and moves to the assembly area quickly
 - (2) everyone is accounted for against an accurately kept attendance sheet
 - (3) children are supervised in an assembly area
5. At least one staff member who holds a current first aid certificate will be supervising the children at all times

Notes:

Evacuation Advice: Schemes and Procedures

Under the Fire and Evacuation of Buildings Regulations **2006**, buildings are classified as either a **schedule 1** building or a **relevant** building. This determines if a **procedure** or a **scheme** is required.

Where an OSCAR programme is located in an existing building, the building owner must have either an approved evacuation scheme, or procedure, whichever is relevant and which also adequately covers the OSCAR programmes occupancy.

If they are not adequate then in accordance with Section 21 of the Fire Service Act 1975 it is up the **owner of the building** to either amend the procedures or apply for a new evacuation scheme.

Refer www.fire.org.nz for more information about the requirements.

staff and management

Staffing

The programme has a sufficient body of qualified and competent staff both to deliver and support the service.

The organisation must be able to demonstrate to Child, Youth and Family that:

1. There are written policies and procedures for recruiting suitable, competent staff and volunteers which complies with relevant legislation.
2. Programme providers consider all relevant aspects of an applicant's background including their level of maturity, experience and training.
3. At least two referees have been contacted prior to appointment.
4. The programme includes in its definition of staff anyone the organisation relies on to deliver its services. This includes volunteers, management and paid staff.
5. No person under the age of 16 is to be included in the staff/child ratio as a staff member.
6. The management and overall site supervision must be carried out by an adult. For the purpose of this standard an adult is deemed by Child, Youth and Family to be a person 20 plus years. Staff/volunteers under 16 years may be involved in the programme but must not be solely responsible for any activity or supervision of any child.
7. The programme management has a written agreement of service with all staff, including volunteers.
8. The programme provides adequate training and support for all staff.
9. The programme uses an effective performance management system for all staff.
10. Staff and volunteers are clear about their:
 - (1) areas of responsibility, limits of responsibility and expectations of their work and behaviour
 - (2) 'duty of care' and that this obligation continues until the parent/caregiver collects the child.
11. Police vetting of the governance and management committee, staff and volunteers is completed prior to confirmation of appointment and at two-yearly intervals. Vetting must be undertaken by the Licensing and Vetting Service, Police National Headquarters, Wellington.
12. The programme does not employ any person in a paid or voluntary capacity, including those in governance or management positions, who has a conviction for sexual crimes or for any offence involving the harm or exploitation of children

Note:

- Police vetting is used because the safety of the child is paramount.
- Programme providers are aware of workers' rights and obligations under the following Acts and any amendments to them:
 - Employment Relations Act 2000
 - Minimum Wages Act 1993
 - Holiday's Act 2003
 - Human Rights Act 1993.

buildings and facilities

Buildings and facilities

Premises are safe and comply with all relevant legislation as well as local city or district council requirements. Potential hazards to the safety of children are repaired, removed or made inaccessible.

The organisation must be able to demonstrate to Child, Youth and Family that:

1. If applicable, the facility has a current warrant of fitness.
2. The facility has an evacuation plan in an area clearly visible to staff, children, parents and caregivers.
3. A notice showing all exits and the assembly area used for emergency evacuations is displayed in a prominent place.
4. Exit signs are clearly displayed on all exits.
5. Premises, grounds and all equipment and furnishings used by the programme are maintained in a safe, clean and hygienic condition, and comply, as appropriate, with local city or district council requirements.
6. There are written policies and procedures to ensure adequate phone services are available at all times.
7. There is an easily accessible phone in the main building where children are being cared for.
8. Where off-site visits are included as part of the programme a cell phone must be available and taken on the off-site excursion.
9. Where there is no cell phone and/or land line phone coverage, the provider must be able to demonstrate the manner in which they will ensure contact can be made quickly with the appropriate emergency service.

record keeping

Record keeping

Programme providers maintain records in accordance with the Privacy Act 1993 and other relevant legislation.

The organisation must be able to demonstrate to Child, Youth and Family that:

1. The programme provider maintains accurate records of current enrolments, attendance, health information and all medication administered by staff. Information is kept in accordance with the Privacy Act 1993, any amendments to the Act and any other relevant legislation.
2. Information on each child is collected on an enrolment form directly from parents/caregivers.
3. Parents/caregivers are advised that they are responsible for notifying the programme of any changes of details.
4. Information collected about children is used only for providing before and after-school care and holiday programmes, is kept in a secure place and is available for parents/caregivers to check for accuracy.

finance

Finance

Finances are managed competently.

The organisation must be able to demonstrate to Child, Youth and Family that:

1. There are written policies and procedures to ensure competent financial management.
2. An appropriate accounting system is used that produces accurate and timely financial statements.
3. Programme providers produce a budget and financial statement prior to the end of the financial year.
4. Accounts, including statements of financial position and income and expenditure are prepared. These accounts are either audited or independently reviewed on an annual basis as detailed below:
 - (1) Audited accounts are required for those organisations whose legislative status requires that audited accounts be produced, for example public companies.
 - (2) Audited accounts are also required for those organisations whose constitution or rules require audited accounts to be produced, eg. most incorporated societies and charitable trusts.
 - (3) Audited accounts are also required for other organisations who receive \$50,000 (GST inclusive) or more in government funding annually.
 - (4) For those organisations that receive less than \$50,000 (GST inclusive) in government funding annually, the accounts are required to be independently reviewed, by an accountant or person with appropriate expertise in financial reporting. A review statement signed by the person conducting the review must be attached to the accounts.
5. Organisations must be able to provide evidence of audited accounts or a copy of the reviewed accounts.

Note:

The Inland Revenue Department has small business advisors to help with the financial management of OSCAR programmes.

camps

Camps

Camps are managed competently and safely.

All previous standards are able to be evidenced in the manner detailed to the appropriate standard. In addition: The organisation must be able to demonstrate to Child, Youth and Family that:

1. Where programmes are outdoor wilderness treks or have a wilderness component Department of Conservation toilet facilities are to be used. Where these are not in place, facilities are to be established to minimise health and environmental risk.
2. Records are available which demonstrate the programme manager or supervisor is in attendance at all times during the camps operation and while children are in attendance.
3. Records are available which demonstrate that risk assessments are completed for all excursions and camp activities.
4. Overnight camps and/or those providing sleeping facilities are required to demonstrate either:
 - (1) two gender-specific staff members are sleeping in the cabin/facility, or
 - (2) two gender-specific supervisors are rostered to patrol the camping/sleeping areas.
5. A procedure is in place which enables children to contact an adult supervisor, should the children need to.

Note:

Where outdoor cooking or activities are occurring with gas or fires, risk assessments must be completed. Hygienic and safe food handling and food storage is also expected.

