Playwork: Risk assessment and risk-benefit analysis policy
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Surrey Early Years and Childcare Service have written this document to help you write a risk assessment and risk-benefit analysis policy for your setting. This document is for reference only and you must adapt it to reflect the service your setting offers. To download guidance on other policies and procedures go to http://new.surreycc.gov.uk/schools-and-learning/childcare-professionals/running-your-childcare-business/early-years-foundation-stage-guidance/policies-and-procedures-in-playwork or ask your playwork advisor.

Whenever we say parents in this document we mean parents and carers and whenever we say child we mean children and young people aged 0 to 19 years old (up to 25 years old for young people with SEND).

Statutory Framework EYFS – 3.64, “. Providers must ensure they take all reasonable steps to ensure staff and children in their care are not exposed to risks and must be able to demonstrate how they are managing risks. Providers must determine where it is helpful to make some written risk assessments in relation to specific issues, to inform staff practice, and to demonstrate how they are managing risks if asked by parents and/or carers or inspectors. Risk assessments should identify aspects of the environment that need to be checked on a regular basis, when and by whom those aspects will be checked, and how the risk will be removed or minimised”.

You should determine how to inform staff practice and how you explain risk assessment to parents and inspectors.

Your risk assessments must meet your insurance policy requirements.

**What is a risk assessment?**

A risk assessment is the process of identifying hazards and then assessing their potential for causing harm or loss. It also includes an evaluation of the consequences of a risk if it materialises and suggests what needs to be done to avoid or minimise the risk.

**What is the difference between a hazard and a risk?**

“A hazard is an article, substance, piece of equipment or an installation with the potential to cause harm or loss or both. A risk is a measure of the probability that the hazards (potential for harm or loss) will materialise. For example, a trailing wire, spillage, loose carpet tile and so on”. Croner’s A-Z Guide to Education Management

“The law does not expect you to eliminate all risk, but you are required to protect people as far as reasonably practicable. You are legally required to assess the risks in your workplace so that you put in place a plan to control the risks”. Five Steps to Risk Assessment, HSE Publications

If you run a small organisation and you are confident you understand what’s involved and are competent to do so, you can do the risk assessment yourself.

- Do you have someone who is responsible for health and safety?
- Are they responsible for carrying out risk assessments?
- Have they been on health and safety training?
- Are risk assessments carried out regularly?
- Where do you display the risk assessment and how can it be accessed?

Remember the registered person is responsible for seeing that the risk assessment is carried out properly.
All reasonable steps must be taken to make sure that hazards to children, both indoors and outdoors, are kept to a minimum.

**Points to consider**

There are five steps to risk assessment:
- **Step 1** – Identify the hazard
- **Step 2** – Decide who might be harmed and how
- **Step 3** – Evaluate the risks and decide on precautions
- **Step 4** – Record your findings and implement them
- **Step 5** – Review your assessment and update if necessary.

Below is a list of areas you may wish to look at (this list is not exhaustive):
- gas appliances
- electrical appliances and wall sockets
- access to kitchen
- bathroom facilities
- security
- supervision of children
- outside areas, including sand pits
- water activities
- fire safety (please see separate guidance document)
- outings
- transport
- sleeping children
- storage
- flooring
- hazardous plants
- ventilation and heating
- windows and doors
- COSHH (Control of Substances Hazardous to Health)
- animal handling
- hot drinks
- allergies
- meal times
- first aid
- equipment.

Do you carry out safety checks throughout the day? For example, at the beginning, middle and end of the session. If you are a breakfast club or after school club, ensure these are carried out before each session.

Who is responsible for carrying out these checks? For example, supervisor of the after school club, head of room, first person to enter premises?

Where are the daily safety checks displayed and how can they be accessed? Who carries these out?

See sample risk assessment (page five) and an example of a premises check list (page six).
**Risk-benefit analysis** is the comparison of the risk of a situation to its related benefits.

If a situation involves more than minimal risk of harm to children, you must be sure that the amount of benefit clearly outweighs the amount of risk. You should be offering play opportunities that offer risk and challenge but be ready to use your professional judgment to know when to intervene in children’s play without disrupting the play cycle.

When you are carrying out the risk-benefit analysis, there must be no potential damage to yourself, others or property and your policy should identify the acceptable and unacceptable risks so all staff are consistent in their approach.

The factors to determine whether or not the level of risk is acceptable are:
- the likelihood of coming to harm
- the severity of harm
- the benefits, rewards or outcomes of the activity.

**Useful resources and websites**
- Health and Safety Executive (HSE) [http://www.hse.gov.uk](http://www.hse.gov.uk)
- Templates can be downloaded from [http://www.hse.gov.uk/risk/controlling-risks.htm](http://www.hse.gov.uk/risk/controlling-risks.htm)
- Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 – requires employers to carry out risk assessments, make arrangements to implement necessary measures, appoint competent people and arrange for appropriate information and training.
- Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992 – covers a wide range of basic health, safety and welfare issues such as ventilation, workstations, seating and welfare facilities.
- Personal Protective Equipment at Work Regulations 1992 – requires employers to provide appropriate protective clothing and equipment for their employees.
- Health and Safety (Display Screen Equipment) Regulations 1992 – sets out requirements for work and visual display units (VDU’s).
- Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations (PUWER) 1992 – requires that equipment provided for use at work, including machinery, is safe.
- Employers’ Liability (Compulsory Insurance) Regulations 1969 – requires employers to take out insurance against accidents and ill-health to their employees.
- Noise at Work Regulation 1989 – requires employers to take action to protect employees from hearing damage.
- Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002 – requires employers to assess the risks of hazardous substances and take appropriate precautions.
- Control of Asbestos at Work Regulations 2002.
• Control of Lead at Work Regulations 2002.