

Risk Assessment in a Childcare Setting

Factsheet

Key legislation & regulations

- Health and Safety at Work 1974
- Manual Handling Operations Regulations 1992
- Management Health and Safety at Work Act 1999
- Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002
- Personal Protective Equipment Regulation 2002
- Reporting of Injuries Diseases and Danger Occurrences Regulation 2013

HASAW Act 1974

Employees responsibilities

- To take care for the health and safety of themselves
- Take care of others who may be affected by their acts or omissions
- Not to misuse any workplace item
- To cooperate with employer to enable them to fulfil their legal obligations
- To comply with policy and procedures
- Report any dangerous situations

Ethos, values & principles

Remember the why?

- “The right to play is the child’s first claim on the community.
- Play is nature’s training for life.
- No community can infringe that right without doing enduring harm to the minds and bodies of its citizens”.

Advantages & disadvantages of risk

Advantages	Disadvantages
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Play value• Social• Physical• Psychological learning• Learning how to cope with real risks• Intangible• A matter of belief• The whole picture• Not really amenable to measurement• Gestalt therapy• Value driven	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Accidents• Costs of provision - capital, revenue• Litigation• Bad publicity• Tangible• All too real• The reductionist view• Measurable by science• Evidence-based therapy• Value driven

Play settings have a legal requirement to assess risk.

Hazard

Is the potential to cause harm.

Risk

Is the likelihood and severity of potential harm.

Risk-benefit assessment, the law, regulations, standards and guidance

Providers are legally required to carry out a ‘suitable and sufficient’ risk assessment of their provision, and to act on the findings. An assessment is a practical assessment of the benefits and the risks of the activity with a focus on hazards with the potential to cause real harm. It is not about creating a risk-free society, but about ensuring that reasonable precautions are taken to avoid injury.

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Step 1 - Identify the Hazards

Work out how people could be harmed

- Walk around and look at what could reasonably be expected to cause you harm
- Ask employees what they think, they may have noticed things that are not immediately obvious to you.
- Have a look at accident records, they often help to identify the less obvious hazards.
- Remember to think about long-term hazards to health, noise, COSHH etc.

Step 2 - Identify people at risk

You need to be clear about who may be harmed

- It will help you identify the best way of managing the risk
- In each case, identify how they may be harmed, i.e. what type of injury or ill health might occur
- Remember - some people e.g. young workers, new or expectant mothers, people with disabilities may be at particular risk

Step 3 - Evaluate the Risks

How can you reduce the risk

First look at what you're already doing, think about what controls you have in place already, then compare this with good practice and ask your self:

- Can I get rid of the risk altogether?
- If not, how can I control the risks so that harm is unlikely?

Forms of risk assessment

Quantitative risk assessment

Attempts to measure the risk by relating the probability of the risk occurring to the possible severity of the outcome and then giving the risk a numerical value.

Qualitative risk assessment

This is the more common assessment which is based purely on personal judgement and is normally defined as high, medium or low risk.

How do we reduce risk?

- Record your outcomes
- Use available proforma
- What current data is available (but new assessment)
- Consider history
- Consider knowledge, skills and experience
- Use your colleagues
- Look and be confident



Managing risk...

...does not totally erase risk or guarantee a good or safe outcome.