

Risk assessment and risk-benefit analysis

Early Years and Childcare Service



SURREY

Surrey Early Years and Childcare Service have written this document to help you write a risk assessment and risk-benefit analysis 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 www.surreycc.gov.uk/eycpractitioners or ask your improvement advisor or childminding advisor to email you a copy.

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 special educational needs and disabilities (SEND)).

You should have a clear and well-understood policy and procedures for assessing risks and review risk assessment frequently. Your risk assessments should identify aspects of the environment that need to be checked on a regular basis, when and by whom, and how the risk will be 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 and health and safety 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”.

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?

Providers must ensure that 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 manage risks – EYFS Statutory Guidance 2014

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
- appropriate food
- first aid
- equipment.

Do you carry out safety checks throughout the day? For example, at the beginning, middle and end of the 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) www.hse.gov.uk
- Risk Assessment leaflet available to download from <http://www.hse.gov.uk/controlling-risk>
- Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (ROSPA) www.rospa.co.uk
- 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.
- <http://www.nhs.uk/weaning>
- Manual Handling Operations Regulations 1992 (as amended) – covers the moving of objects by hand or bodily force.
- 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 and 1998 – requires that equipment provided for use at work, including machinery, is safe.
- Health and Safety (First Aid) Regulations 1981 – covers requirements for first aid.
- Employers' Liability (Compulsory Insurance) Regulations 1969 and (amended regulations) 1998 – 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.
- The control of noise at work regulations 2005
- Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations (amended 2004) – 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.

This is a reference document that you should adapt for your own setting.

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Sample risk assessment

Setting name: _____

Date of risk assessment: _____

Identify the hazards	Level of risk			Who might be harmed and how?	Action to be taken	By whom and when	Review date
	Low	Med	High				
Walk around your workplace. Speak to staff. Refer to manufacturers instructions. Refer to COSHH sheets/data sheets. Review accident/incident books.				For example: Children Staff New workers Expectant mothers People with disabilities Cleaners Members of the public Visitors Contractors Maintenance workers Cook	Look at what you are already doing. Compare this with good practice. Consider: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Can I get rid of the hazard altogether? If not, how can I control the risks so that harm is unlikely? Think about the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Try a less risky option. Prevent access to the hazard. Organise work to reduce exposure to the hazard. Issue personal protection equipment. Provide welfare facilities (eg first aid, washing facilities). Involve staff so proposals for change will work in practice and won't introduce new hazards.	Name of staff member/s responsible for carrying this out.	Date this action will be reviewed and reassessed.
Plug socket without cover		✓		Children may poke something into plug	Plug socket covered with guard. To order more guards so in stock if arises again	Insert name	Insert date
Bottle of bleach left on side in reach of children			✓	Children may open bleach bottle Staff could spill bleach	Bottle of bleach removed and stored in lockable cupboard out of reach of children. Staff notice displayed as reminder to keep all cleaning fluids in lockable cupboard.	Insert name	Insert date

Example of premises checklist

Room or area	Times of check and action to be taken					
	8.30am	Action	12.30pm	Action	6.00pm	Action
List all the areas you use in your setting	See note below					
Large room (inc. equipment)	MS	Removed broken bike	MS		MS	
Sleep room	MS		MS		MS	
Outside play area	MS		x	x	MS	
Sandpit	MS	Removed dog faeces	MS		MS	
Boys toilets	MS		MS	Added more toilet roll	MS	
Girls toilets	MS		MS		MS	
Staff toilets	MS		MS		MS	Added more soap

- Think about the times you would need to check each area as some rooms may need to be checked more frequently than others.
- You could use initials to indicate that the check was completed and by whom.
- Action may involve simply removing an item or completing a risk assessment.

The grid above is an example and will need to be changed to suit your setting.