

Risk Assessment in the Early Years

It is crucial that all children in our care are afforded a safe and secure environment in which they can play, learn and explore. In view of this it is important that providers ensure that, as well as conducting formal risk assessment, they constantly review both the environments and activities that the children are being exposed too and make necessary adjustments accordingly to secure the children's safety at all times.

Early Years Foundation Stage 2017 (EYFS)

Under section 3.64 & 3.65 of the EYFS 2017 Statutory it stipulates the following

- *Providers **must** ensure that they take all reasonable steps to ensure staff and children in their care are not exposed to risks'.*
- *Providers **must** be able to demonstrate how they are managing risk.*
- *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.*

In terms of 3.65, EYFS 2017

- *Children **must** be kept safe while on outings.*
- *Providers **must** assess the risks or hazards which may arise for the children and **must** identify the steps to be taken to remove, minimise and manage those risks and hazards.*
- *The assessment **must** include consideration of adult to child ratios.*
- *Vehicles in which children are being transported, and the driver of those vehicles, **must** be adequately insured.*

NB * Though risk assessments do not necessarily need to be in writing, Waltham Forest recommend that these are so that providers can evidence due diligence, particularly in the event of an incident or accident

Below are some examples of what you should risk assess in your setting:

- *boundaries and gates;*

- *water hazards, for example ponds, drains and pools;*
- *hazardous substances and equipment;*
- *hazardous plants;*
- *pets and other animals;*
- *electricity and gas;*
- *doors, windows and glass;*
- *floors and stairs;*
- *stacked furniture;*
- *the kitchen and food preparation/access to the kitchen;*
- *hot appliances;*
- *hygiene, cleanliness and minimising the risk of infection;*
- *outings and trips;*
- *fire safety;*
- *the condition of prams, pushchairs, highchairs and low chairs;*
- *the use of safety harnesses;*
- *the condition of toys and other equipment;*
- *sandpits and their protection from contamination;*
- *furniture, equipment and toys;*
- *the arrangements for monitoring children who are sleeping;*
- *linens such as bedding and towels;*

- any other relevant areas. E.g. visitors, exits and entries, security

(above taken from Practice Guidance for the Early Years Foundation Stage May 2008 Setting the Standards for Learning, Development and Care for children from birth to five)

Appendix 2: Example of risk assessment template

Workplace or specific task being assessed		Establishment	
Date of Assessment		Planned Review Date	
Name of assessor (PRINT)		Position	
Head of Establishment or Line Manager's sign off			
Signed		Position	
			Date

No.	What are the hazards?	Who might be harmed?	What is the risk?	What are you already doing?	What further action is necessary?	Action by whom?	Action by when?	Date completed
5								
6								
7								

To download an electronic copy of this template please visit <https://thehub.walthamforest.gov.uk/policy/schools/health-and-safety/sample-risk-assessments> Here you will find more information and examples on COSHH, Manual Handling and other things.