

Risk Assessments

All providers are legally expected to carry out risk assessments on their premises and resources as part the statutory requirements of the EYFS framework. A risk assessment is simply a careful examination of what, in your setting, could cause harm to children, staff and visitors, so that you can decide whether you have taken enough precautions to avoid harm.

How to start your Risk Assessments

- Take a walk around you setting and have a look at what could reasonably cause harm to children and adults. It is quite a good idea to look at the environment with a child's perspective.
- Ask the staff what they think. They may have noticed things that are not immediately obvious to you.
- Check manufacturer instructions of equipment and resources, as they can be very helpful in identifying potential hazards.
- Check your accident records; they may help you identify less obvious hazards.
- Once you have identified the hazards, you need to evaluate the risks and decide on precautions and record all your findings.

Below is an example of a risk assessment form that could be used:

Risk Assessment for:.....						
Name of assessor:.....			Date:			
Assessors signature:.....			Date of review:.....			
Area/activity	What is the hazard	What risk does the hazard pose and to who?	Risk level H/M/L	What precautions are in place to reduce the risk	Risk level achieved H/M/L	Any further action required

Filling in your risk assessment:

Area / Activity

This box should state which area, activity or resource within your setting, the risk assessment is being carried out, for example the sleep room, construction area or messy play.

What is the Hazard?

A hazard is somebody or something likely to cause injury, damage, or loss, for example: items left on stairs, electricity sockets and sharp corners on furniture.

What risk does the hazard pose and to who?

This should include things that could happen as a result of the hazard being left, for example a trip or fall, electrocution or fire. It is also a requirement that you also identify who is at risk i.e. children, staff, visitors, parents etc.

Risk Level

This is the likelihood that the injury, damage or loss will happen without sufficient precautions. It is measured as High / Medium / Low.

- High – It is certain that an injury, damage or loss will occur.
- Medium – it is quite likely that an injury, damage or loss will occur.
- Low – it is unlikely that an injury, damage or loss will occur.

What precautions are in place to reduce the risk?

Within this section you should list what precautions that are in place to reduce the risk of the hazard taking place, for example items are not allowed to be left on stairs, all electric sockets are covered with socket covers or area is supervised at all times.

Risk Level achieved H/M/L

You should now state what level the risk is following the introduction of the precaution, again using the high/medium/low measurement. For example, by installing socket covers throughout your setting and trying to position furniture in front of sockets, you may have reduced the risk of electrocution to a child from high to low.

Any further action required?

Here you should list any further work that needs to be done in order to reduce the risk further. For example installation of non-slip flooring to prevent falls and slips within your messy area. This of course may not be possible at this time, but is something you see as priority.

Risk assessments should cover all areas of your setting and should take into consideration any potential hazards that children and adults may meet whilst in your setting. See page 21 of the EYFS Practice Guidance for a comprehensive list of risks to be considered. The law does not expect to eliminate all risk, but you are required to protect people as far as “reasonably practicable”

A Health and Safety policy should be in place which includes procedures for identifying, reporting and dealing with accidents, hazards and faulty equipment. Please refer to ‘The Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage’ for more guidance.

Daily Risk Assessments

Daily risk assessments are something most of you already do, but it is important that the act of walking around the setting checking the environment is safe prior to the children arriving, is recorded. A checklist system is the most ideal way to achieve this. Below is an example of a tick list system.

Risk	Mon	Tues	Weds	Thurs	Fri
Fire escapes are clear					
Electrical sockets covered					
All chemicals out of reach					
Toys and equip in good working order					
Radiator heat controlled					
Ventilation available					
Toilets clean					
Toilet paper, paper towels and soap available					
Windows and doors secure.					
Please initial					

You can personalise the check list yourself, with risks that are relevant to your setting. It is important that the person responsible for completing the checks each day includes their initials on the form and the forms are kept for a suitable amount of time.

Outings Risk Assessments

For each type of outing, providers must carry out a full risk assessment, which includes an assessment of required adult: child ratios. This assessment must take account of the nature of the outing, and consider whether it is appropriate to exceed the normal ratio requirement, in accordance with providers' procedures for supervision of children on outings (The Early Year's Foundation Stage – Statutory framework). It is a requirement that assessments are reviewed prior to any outing. Perhaps a standard form could be completed which includes the hazards that may be encountered and precautions that should be taken. It is also a good idea to have a tick list of essential equipment such as first aid kit, mobile phone and contact numbers.

We recommend that for regular outings where the hazards and risks are constant such as feeding the ducks at the park or a walk into town, a permanent form is compiled. This will cut down the time it takes to risk assess the outing. All that will be needed is for the adults to review the risk assessment to remind them of the hazards and perhaps add extra ones for that day if necessary i.e. snow and wind. A checklist should always be done to ensure the right equipment and information is taken on every outing. The setting needs to be able to show that a child has left the premises and for how long. How you choose to do that is up to you, but you could include a register of children on each outing on the risk assessment or you may have a separate outings register book. Alternatively you may make them as out in the daily register. We have combined the two as an effective way keeping it simple with just one form. An example of a suitable form is shown below.

Outings Risk Assessment																			
Location:			Date of outing:																
Time of departure:			Time of return:																
What is the hazard	What risk does the hazard pose and to whom?	Risk level H/M/L	What precautions are in place to reduce the risk	Risk level achieved H/M/L	Any further action required														
Checklist <table style="width: 100%; border: none;"> <tr> <td style="width: 80%;">Mobile phone and contact numbers</td> <td style="width: 20%; text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Correct ratios adhered</td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> <tr> <td>First aid kit and qualified first aider</td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Nappy changing kit</td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Wet wipes</td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Change of clothing</td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Drinks and snacks</td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> </table>						Mobile phone and contact numbers	<input type="checkbox"/>	Correct ratios adhered	<input type="checkbox"/>	First aid kit and qualified first aider	<input type="checkbox"/>	Nappy changing kit	<input type="checkbox"/>	Wet wipes	<input type="checkbox"/>	Change of clothing	<input type="checkbox"/>	Drinks and snacks	<input type="checkbox"/>
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Wet wipes	<input type="checkbox"/>																		
Change of clothing	<input type="checkbox"/>																		
Drinks and snacks	<input type="checkbox"/>																		
Register : children				Adults															
Signature of staff member leading the outing and completing the risk assessment																			
Signature..... Print name.....																			

Questions and Answers

How often should general risk assessments be reviewed?

You should have a system in place that enables them to be reviewed at least once a year or more frequently if the need arises, for example: when you purchase new equipment or following an accident within the setting that could have been prevented.

Who should see the risk assessments?

All members of staff within the setting and any volunteers should have read the risk assessments and take responsibility for the implementation of the precautions.

Where should the risk assessments be stored?

Risk assessments are completed to identify potential risks and ensure staff know the precautions put in place, so it makes sense that they are available for all staff. An ideal location would be either on staff notice boards, within nursery rooms or if that is not possible, in a file which is readily available. Where there is a high risk area such as a cluttered cupboard or stairs you may wish to consider displaying them on the wall or door.

Should the Risk assessments be included in Staff Induction?

Definitely, staff induction is an ideal opportunity for you to ensure that the new staff member is aware of risks around the setting and precautions in place. It is also good practice for you to record that the staff member has read and understood the risk assessments.

Should I have a named Health and safety staff member?

It is not a specific legal requirement, although some settings have assigned the responsibility to a member of staff. This relieves the pressure off the manager/owner and the named member of staff member can concentrate on attending relevant training and dealing with all health and safety issues throughout the setting.

Visit the HSE website www.hse.gov.uk for further information

SAMPLE