

Example Risk Assessment for a Child Care setting such as a nursery or child minder

Setting the scene

The manager carried out the risk assessment in this nursery, which is located on a suburban residential estate.

It caters for 20 children aging from 6 months to 11 years of age. The manager is a full-time member of staff, as is the deputy manager who provides cover for the manager. Both the manager and the assistant manager are appointed persons for first aid.

There are ten other staff members, a mixture of part and full time staff and some students on work placement. Most staff are carers however there is also a cook and a part-time caretaker.

How was the risk assessment done?

The manager followed the HSE guidance www.hse.gov.uk/risk

1. To identify the hazards, the manager:

- looked at the Council's website, www.lancaster.gov.uk/childcare to learn where hazards can occur, including the pages for child care
- walked around the nursery and all other areas, noting things that might pose a risk and taking into consideration what they'd learnt from the websites. They also took occasional activities, such as changing displays or light bulbs, into account;
- talked to members of staff to listen to their concerns and opinions about health and safety issues in the nursery; and
- looked at the accident book, to understand what previous problems had occurred..

2. The manager then wrote down who could be harmed by the hazards and how.

3. For each hazard, the manager wrote down what controls, if any, were in place to manage these hazards. Where they didn't consider existing controls good enough, the manager wrote down what else needed to be done to control the risk.

4. The manager discussed the findings with staff and pinned a copy of the risk assessment up in the staff room. They put the risk assessment into practice, making sure that each identified action was done and ticking each one off as it was completed. They also decided to make it part of the induction process for new staff.

5. The manager decided to review and update the risk assessment every year or straightaway if any major changes in the workplace happened.

Important reminder

This example risk assessment shows the kind of approach a small business might take. Use it as a guide to think through some of the hazards in your business and the steps you need to take to control the risks. Please note that it is not a generic risk assessment that you can just put your company name on and adopt wholesale without any thought. This would not satisfy the law – and would not be effective in protecting people.

Every business is different – you need to think through the hazards and controls required in your business for yourself. **This example risk assessment is unlikely to identify all hazards in your business.**

What are the hazards?	Who might be harmed and how?	What are you already doing?	What further action is necessary?	Action by Whom?	Action by When?	Done
Slips and Trips	Staff, children and visitors may be injured if they trip over objects, slip on spillages, or fall down stairs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good housekeeping. • All areas well lit, including stairs. • No trailing leads or cables. • All staff keep work areas clear e.g. no boxes left in walkways, deliveries stored immediately. • All rooms cleared and tidied throughout the day and before staff leave. • A child safe stair gate is fitted at the top and bottom of every stair case. • Suitable non-slip flooring installed in the kitchen, toilets and areas for handwashing and designated for wet play. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spillages in the kitchen to be addressed immediately. 	All kitchen staff	From now on	25/3/2011
	If children fall against sharp or hard edges they may suffer injury.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All hard surfaces are protected e.g. corner protectors on tables etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arrange for the loose carpet in the baby room to be secured. 	Manager	Immediately	30/3/2011
Manual Handling	Staff risk injuries or back pain from handling heavy/bulky objects e.g. deliveries of paper.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trolley used to transport heavy items such as boxes of paper or packs of nappies. • Only light objects stored on high shelves. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure staff receive Manual Handling training and that a sufficient number of trolleys are 	Manager	From now on	30/5/11

			available. Staff must be made to use the trolley.			
Musculoskeletal	Staff risk bad backs if stooping to pick up children or change babies on the floor.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Changing tables used. Staff advised to use small chairs or sit on floor to interact with children at low level. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure sufficient number of changing tables are available. 	Baby room team leader	30/5/2011	10/4/2011
	Kneeling on hard surfaces can cause housemaid's knee (<i>prepatellar bursitis</i>).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff discouraged from kneeling, told to use chairs, bean bags or sit on their bottom etc, Knee pads given to staff who have sore knees. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure all staff receive training, determine if any staff are suffering from sore knees and take appropriate action. 	Manager	25/4/2011	31/5/2011
Work at Height	Falls from any height can cause bruising, fractures or even death.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Internal windows cleaned & light bulbs changes using a step ladder. Contractor services air conditioning unit on the roof, they provided risk assessments and use a harness to prevent a fall. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Appropriate access equipment e.g. kick stool or small steps are provided to reach high shelves. 	Manager	Immediately	25/3/2011
Security	Staff and children could be at risk from unauthorised persons on premises.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All perimeter doors and entrances are fitted with a coded security lock. Holes in fences and walls quickly repaired. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The security code for the doors is changed every term, so that 	Manager	25/3/2011	25/3/2011

	Children put themselves at risk, if escape from premises.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Entrance/reception is clearly signed for visitors. 	ex-employees or parents do not know the code.			
Electrical	Staff and children can get electrical shocks or burns from using faulty electrical equipment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff trained to spot and report (to the manager or team leader) any defective plugs, discoloured sockets or damaged equipment. Defective equipment immediately removed from use. Staff told not to bring their own appliances to work e.g. fans, heaters etc Competent Person e.g. electrician appointed to undertake Portable Appliance Testing. 		Team Leader/Manager	25/3/2011	25/3/2011
	Over use of extension leads can cause electrical overloading and fire.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Using a 4 plug extension to permanently power a heater, a CD player and disco light in the under two's room. Use of extension leads strongly discouraged. 	Ask an electrician to fit extra sockets.	Manager	15/4/2011	30/4/2011
	Children at risk of electrical shock if put fingers or objects into exposed sockets.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plug safety covers inserted in all sockets in all rooms where children have access. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Check daily that all covers are in place. Ensure that there is a supply of spares in the office. 	Team Leaders.	25/3/2011	25/3/2011
Asbestos	Staff,	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Location and condition of 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Arrange for a 	Manager	25/3/2011	10/6/2011

Asbestos containing materials (ACM's) are present in most buildings built before 2000.	contractors and children exposed to asbestos fibres may develop serious lung disease.	any asbestos unknown.	Asbestos Survey to be undertaken by a competent person. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Using the survey report, put in place a management plan. 			
Burns and Scalds	Children who come into contact with hot surfaces may be burnt.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All radiators are fitted with appropriate guards. No children are allowed in the kitchen. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Check to ensure all guards in place. 	Team Leaders	25/3/2011	25/3/2011
	Children may be scalded washing hands.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All taps at hand washing and other facilities, at which children have access, are fitted with Thermostatic mixing valves to prevent water being discharged above 44°C. 				
	Children could be scalded by hot liquids	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Baby bottles and other drinks e.g. warm milk should be heated in the bottle warmer. Microwave's should not be used as that can lead to over heating liquids. Staff do not take hot drinks into rooms with children, staff only have hot drinks in the staff room. 		Team Leaders		
Play Equipment (Indoor and outdoor)	Children could be injured by faulty equipment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Equipment is checked daily for defects before the children use them. 		Team Leaders	From now on	From now on

Glass doors and windows	Children could be badly cut if glass is broken.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unknown! 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure all glass below 2 meters is safety glass, or adequately guarded against breakage. 	Manager	25/3/2011	25/4/2011
	Children can fall out of low first floor windows.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Windows are fitted with restrictors, or kept locked. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Check to ensure all windows locked or restrictors are fitted. 	Manager		
Doors	Children may suffer serious finger injuries if they are trapped in heavy doors.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Finger guards fitted to the hinges on all heavy doors to which the children will have access. Door closing devices fitted to prevent slamming. Finger guards have been fitted following manufacturers instructions and do not present an additional 'drawing in' or trapping hazard. Regular visual inspections are undertaken to check for damage or deterioration of guards. Any damage is reported immediately and remedied 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure all finger guards are fitted and in good working order. 	Team Leader	25/3/2011	25/3/2011
COSHH	Children and staff could catch pathogenic organisms or be harmed by	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Potties emptied down the toilet or sluice sink, then washed in hot soapy water. Chemical disinfectant only used if there is an outbreak 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure team leaders are not using chemical sanitizers to clean toilets & 	Manager	25/3/2011	26/3/2011

	chemicals during potty training/nappy change.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> of diarrhoea, • Chemical must be washed off potty after disinfecting. (<i>See separate COSHH assessments</i>) • Clinical waste bin (yellow) provided and collected by licensed waste contractor. • <i>See HPA guidance, Infection Control & Communicable Disease Guidance for Early Years.</i> 	potties.			
COSHH (Continued)	Soft and hard toys could be vectors for pathogenic organisms.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hard toys are regularly washed with soap and warm water. • Soft toys are regularly laundered or replaced. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure Team Leaders regularly undertake cleaning. 	Manager	25/3/2011	25/3/2011
	Animal faeces in the outdoor play area/sand pit could lead to zoonotic infections for staff and children.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The sand pit is kept covered when not in use. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Team Leaders to check the outdoor play area and sand pit before play commences. 	Team Leaders	From now on	From now on
	Poisonous plants could cause harm to children if ingested.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • List of poisonous plants kept in managers office. • Caretaker tends garden monthly or more frequently in summer and removes poisonous varieties of plant. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Manager checks outside areas weekly to ensure poisonous plants are removed. 	Caretaker	Monthly	Monthly
	Outbreak of infectious disease, could spread infection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Follow the GOV.UK guidance: Preventing and Controlling Infections 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure sufficient supplies available. 	Manager	25/3/2011	25/3/2011

	amongst children and staff.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provided disposable gloves, aprons and antibacterial cleaners. • Ensure good handwashing techniques are promoted amongst staff and children 				
COSHH (Continued)	Staff affected by occupational dermatitis, by prolonged exposure with water and detergents.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff provides with gloves to undertake cleaning and washing in the kitchen etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide neutral hand moisturising cream for staff to use. • Check staff for signs of dermatitis. 	Manager	15/4/2011	15/4/2011
	Staff and children may be harmed by use of chemicals etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individual; COSHH risk assessments and control measures have been produced for every chemical used (<i>Disinfectants, paints, cleaners, weed killers, wet wipes etc</i>). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Obtain the Safety Data Sheets, from the suppliers, for all chemicals. 	Manager	10/6/2011	10/6/2011
Educational Visits	Staff and children may be harmed during visits.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A separate bespoke risk assessment is undertaken by the team leader or manager before any visit. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None at this time. 			
Sleeping children	Children at risk of SIDS, choking, suffocation, or escape.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cots and mattresses in suitable good conditions daily checks for wear and tear. Sleep mats which are showing any signs of wear and tear, or exposed foam must be disposed of, and 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None. 	Area leaders		

		<p>new beds purchased.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children must be positioned so that they are face to feet with the child laying on the neighbouring sleep mat. • Not items loosely hung over the cots for example bed bags, blankets, bibs. • Nearby windows shut, and any cords tied and secure <p>Policies reflect sleep checking.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Doors to the sleep room are secured. • Children monitored at all times, actively checked by staff every 10 minutes. 				
Nappy changing	<p>Staff lifting children or kneeling on floor at risk of injuries such as back injury or house maid's knee.</p> <p>Children may fall from changing table</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use change tables with steps so children who are able can walk up and down to the change table surface, removing the need for employees to lift children. • Use change tables with space underneath for employees' feet so they can stand close to the child being changed. • Make sure changing supplies and waste disposal facilities are within easy reach, reducing the need for employees to repeatedly twist, bend or use an extended reach. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure changing table is well maintained, broken straps are replaced. • Monitor and review staff practices 	Line Manager		

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Children are never left on a changing table, and if there is a strap it must be used. 				
Contractors	Contactors, staff and children.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Risk assessments & method statements will be obtained from contractors before they start work. Work will generally be undertaken when the nursery is closed. Children will always be excluded from work rooms. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> None at this time. 			
Choking Hazards	Children (especially under 18 months) may choke on Food	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All food is cut into small pieces. Avoid feeding reconstituted meat such as hot dogs or burgers to young children. Fruit with skins such as grapes, apples & plums is cut into small pieces or peeled as they can be difficult for babies to chew. Chewing gum is banned from the premises (including staff). Toffee's and boiled sweets must not be given to children under 5. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All meals are carefully planned by the cook. Team Leaders & carers to assist children at meal times as necessary. 	Cook & Team Leaders as necessary.		
	Children may choke on non-food objects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Small items such as coins, pen tops, balloons and plastic wrappings are kept out of reach of children. Heuristic play and crafting objects are suitable for the age range of children. i.e. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Team Leaders to ensure no objects that pose a choking hazard to their children are present in the room. 	Team Leaders as necessary.		

		<p>small objects will not be given to young children.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small items not suitable for use by young children will not be stored or used in their designated area or room. 				
New and expectant mothers	Employees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bespoke risk assessment for the employee will be undertaken for employees who are pregnant, given birth within the last 6 months and/or are breast feeding. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Risk assessment reviewed at least monthly or when the employee notifies you of a change. 	Line manager		
Young workers	Work experience (School age) Apprentices Full time employees under 18.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bespoke risk assessment for employees who are young workers as their lack of experience makes them vulnerable to accidents. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Risk assessment reviewed regularly. 	• Line Manager		