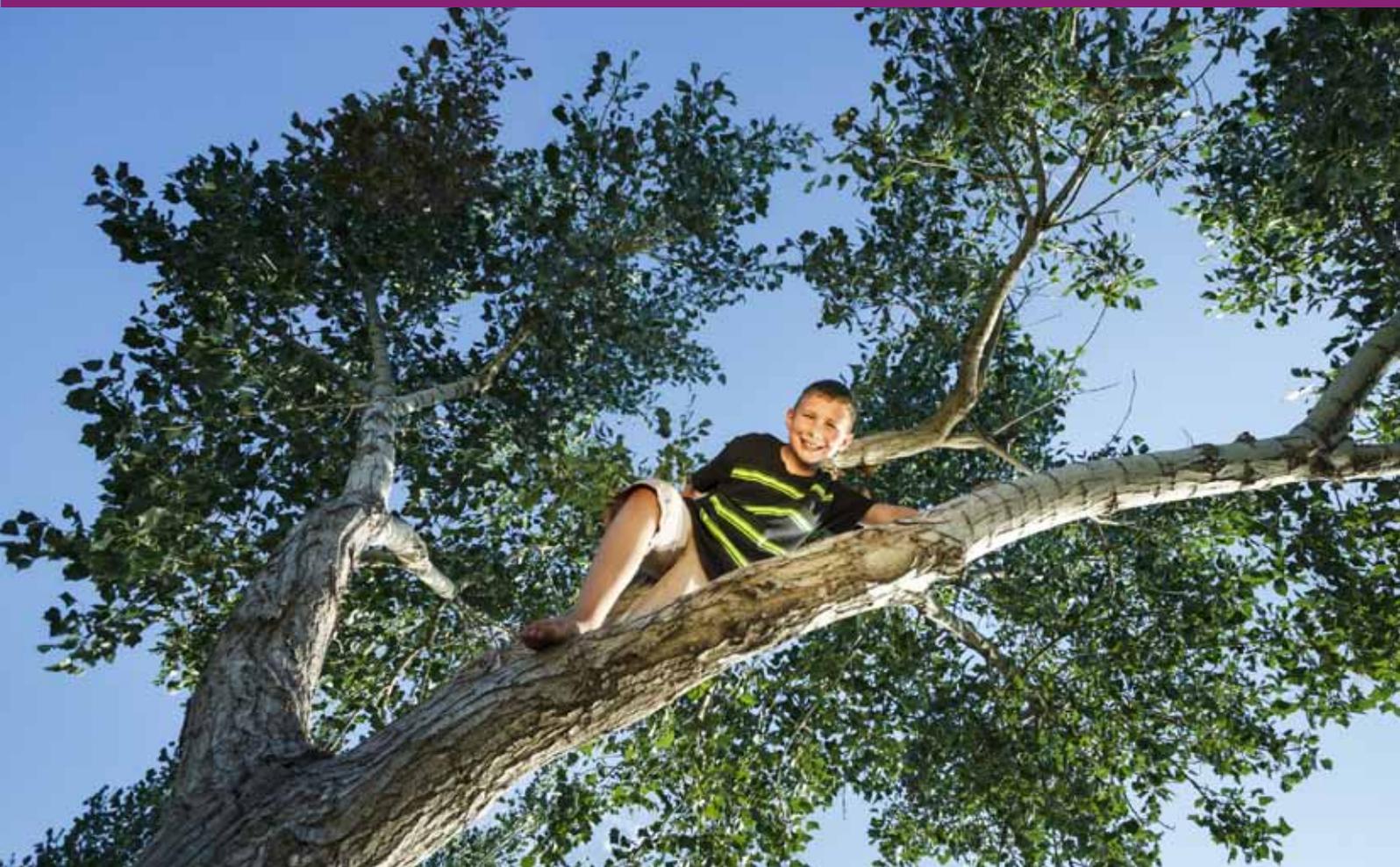


Gowrie "Children First"

LADY GOWRIE TASMANIA



RISK ASSESSMENT AND RISK MANAGEMENT IN FAMILY DAY CARE

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Disclaimer

The information in this document has been developed by the PSC for the purpose of disseminating information for the benefit of Tasmanian Family Day Care Services and Settings. While every effort has been made to ensure that the material within the document is accurate and up-to-date, independent skills and judgments should be exercised before relying upon it. The document is not a substitute for independent professional advice and users should obtain any appropriate professional advice relevant to their particular circumstances.

In December 2009, all Australian Governments agreed to a new National Quality Framework for Early Childhood Education and Care. This means that all Australian children, regardless of their location, will get the best possible start in life through quality early childhood education and care and school age care services. The Framework helps providers improve their services in the areas that impact on a child's learning and development and empowers families to make informed choices about which service is best for their child.

The National Quality Framework (NQF) includes:

- A national legislative framework that consists of the Education and Care Services National Law and Education and Care Services National Regulations.
- A National Quality Standard.
- An assessment and rating system.
- A regulatory authority in each state and territory who will have primary responsibility for the approval, monitoring and quality assessment of services in their jurisdiction in accordance with the national legislative framework and in relation to the National Quality Standard.
- The Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA).

There is a wide body of evidence that the quality of children's education and care affects a child's health, wellbeing and competence throughout their lives. The early years are critical in laying the foundation for children's achievement in schooling and into adulthood. The approved Learning Frameworks within the NQF lists 5 outcomes for children:

- Children have a strong sense of identity.
- Children are connected with and contribute to their world.
- Children have a strong sense of wellbeing.
- Children are confident and involved learners.
- Children are effective communicators.

This Risk Assessment document is a result of discussions and needs identified by Family Day Care Services across Tasmania during the implementation phase of the National Quality Framework (NQF). Based on the legislative requirements and the outcomes listed above, Family Day Care Services are now required to conduct regular, routine assessments of risks and manage these accordingly. This Risk Assessment document aims at providing clear and concise information for the purposes of assisting informed decisions to be made.



What is risk?

The International Standardisation Organisation (ISO) 31000 (2009) /ISO Guide 73:2002 definition of risk is the

'effect of uncertainty on objectives'.

In this definition, uncertainties include events (which may or not happen) and uncertainties caused by ambiguity or a lack of information. It also includes both negative and positive impacts on objectives. Many definitions of risk exist in common usage, however this definition was developed by an international committee representing over 30 countries and is based on the input of several thousand subject matter experts.

A more appropriate definition from Risk, chapter "Risk vs. uncertainty", Wikipedia, for an education and care service is:

A state of uncertainty where some of the possibilities involve a loss, catastrophe, or other undesirable outcome.

Risk is underpinned by three factors which help determine if it is acceptable or tolerable:

- The likelihood of coming to harm.
- The severity of that harm; and
- The benefits, rewards or outcomes of that activity.

For a risk to be managed, a hazard must have been identified. Hazard risk sources include;

- the physical environment of the education and care service
- equipment used at the service
- the substances used and stored at the service; and
- work systems including the behaviours of others at the service.

Young children may not have the knowledge or ability to be able to identify and manage any hazards presented by the equipment or the experience, and this must be the role of

the educator or responsible adult. Risk-taking by children, while considered to be at the frontier of children's learning, can create a dilemma for educators in education and care services. Being able to clearly identify an area of risk, and then conduct an assessment of it with a view to the management of it will support educators in their decision making process: When writing a risk assessment write it as a benefit risk assessment, meaning;

- that benefits for learning are recorded first
- the elements of risk are considered before deciding if they are manageable by the children.

The goal is not to remove all risk, but to ensure the risk that is present, is manageable. Children are very capable of playing a valuable role in the task of risk assessment. Children can become risk managers if they are empowered to understand their space, safety and develop an awareness of risk.

A risk benefit assessment can;

- give children freedom
- support children to feel empowered
- support educators to feel empowered
- give children, families and educators a voice; and
- expand the opportunities to connect with the natural environment.

Children need to be supported to develop an awareness of risk in order to be able to assess it. Providing opportunities to practice controlling their bodies and understanding the natural environment will enhance awareness of hazards and therefore make the identification of risk an easier and successful option.

"Risk management that pursues only the objective of getting it wrong will be oblivious to significant opportunity costs" (Adams and Thompson, 2002)





What is a hazard?

A hazard is a situation that has the potential to harm the health and safety of people or to damage equipment. The situation could involve a task, chemical or equipment used. Hazard management is a continuous process that can be used to improve the health and safety of all stakeholders at the education and care service.

Hazard management is essentially a problem-solving process aimed at identifying hazards, assessing the risk, and controlling the risk where elimination of it is not possible. This is followed up by checking to see that the controls were successful (evaluation) and reviewing the whole process (review) after a period of time or when something changes.

Is risk taking appropriate in an education and care service?

It is widely recognised that brain development is at its most critical phase from birth to age three years when crucial intellectual, emotional and social abilities are being developed (Hetzmann 2004). It is also known that children learn through play and children are born to explore.

“Play nourishes every aspect of children’s development—it forms the foundation of intellectual, social, physical, and emotional skills necessary for success in school and in life. Play paves the way for learning” (Kalliala 2006). In any environment where children legitimately spend time at play, there is an inherent element of risk.

Stine (1997, p. 29) asserts, ‘by taking risks, by facing a challenge, we learn about our competence and our limitations. Trying to exist in a world without some measure of risk is not only impossible but inhibits our lives and the child’s need for challenge’.

List three areas that could be considered as being a risk for either field workers/coordination unit staff or Educator:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Through risk and challenge encountered in play, children are able to develop skills and judgment vital to negotiating every-day life. Without such opportunities children may not learn to judge risk appropriately for themselves and will be vulnerable to misplaced feelings of fear or conversely have little sense of danger. It is imperative that “educators create an environment where it is comfortable to take risks, discuss ideas and have the opportunity to follow them through.” (Arthur et al, 2005).

Risk has a role to play in learning and as research shows, has the potential to achieve positive outcomes for children (Lewis, 2005; Nichol, 2000). Some of the learning outcomes are that children become strong stakeholders in their own development, show an increase in confidence and competence, become independent and responsible for their own actions. They develop coping mechanisms, problem solving capabilities and transferable skills which also increases their self esteem and self belief. Children develop

a respect for danger, hazards and experimentation. We can add to these potential outcomes by looking at the natural environment, such as the Australian bush or paddocks, which are characterised by instability and this demands alertness by any user, regardless of their age (Warden 2009).

Porter (2003) refers to children learning self-control and educators promoting children’s competence. This in turn is divided into three categories:

1. Encouraging children to be independent, not stepping in to complete tasks on their behalf. By allowing children to attempt tasks for themselves, even if they make mistakes along the way, children are allowed to develop faith in the own abilities to learn and to take risks.
2. Teaching children self-instruction skills also helps promote children’s competence. Supporting children in participating in new tasks to achieve success requires the ability to organise oneself to do it. It is not only about achieving, but also incorporates planning, persisting, changing plans if required, persisting again, changing if required, and so on.
3. Competent children require considerate behaviour, involving being able to control their own behaviour. Porter maintains that helping children become competent at skills they value, fostering their self-concept and assisting in ensuring their ideals are reasonable, will ultimately ensure children have a healthy self-esteem allowing them to be successful learners willing to try new challenges and become engaged in their environment. Alternatively, children who doubt their own abilities;
 - a. often avoid trying something new;
 - b. avoid taking risks or being adventurous; and
 - c. give up easily.

Taking risk and learning to identify and manage this risk is indeed a life-long learning skill.

Hint:
Do not mistake risks with consequences. ‘Injuries’, ‘Financial Loss’ and ‘Reputation Damage’ are not risks but consequences of a risk - i.e. if your risk was to eventuate, it could result in injuries, financial loss and/or reputation damage. (Risk management Services, RiskCover. Insurance Commission of WA, 2011)



What is risk identification and risk assessment?

Risk identification is being able to consider and identify the likelihood and severity of the outcome in situations where hazards have been recognised. A hazard is something with the potential to cause harm or injury. Effectively this means that field workers/coordination unit staff and educators in Family Day Care must constantly be making decisions recording the usage of toys, equipment, resources, events and occasions where a hazard is evident. It is not necessary to document all risk assessments following an identification of a hazard. The following are some examples of where an internal or 'head' assessment is satisfactory:

1. Visually checking the cleaning products are put away following their usage.
2. Ensuring the attendance register is available and completed daily.
3. Ensuring toys are clean and safe for use.
4. Removing medications from bags and storing them appropriately.

Whilst many of these may be included in a daily checklist of some sort, it is not necessary to document an individual assessment of the identified hazard and consider the likelihood and severity of the outcome if any of the examples were not met. Following the legal requirements of any relevant Laws, following service policies and procedures minimizes the exposure to potential litigious situations. Where a policy or procedure refers to a risk assessment being conducted, or where an unusual or unknown circumstance occurs, or is being planned, then a risk assessment must occur. A documented risk assessment must occur in situations where a risk is identified as a result of a hazard. This assessment must be retained by either the service, or the individual educator.

Assessing the level of risk does not automatically mean that the event or occasion cannot happen. Risk assessment allows consideration of the benefits for children's learning when any foreseeable hazards have been identified and measures put into place to eliminate or to control the likelihood of harm or injury to any children. Poorly managed hazards are the main cause of harm and/or injury. Finding ways to eliminate or control hazards is the best way to reduce harm or injuries.

Consideration of the benefits to the child must be included in each risk assessment. Will allowing children access to a hazard:

- Provide them with the opportunity to improve competence and mastery of something that has not been mastered before?
- Can these same opportunities be provided in an alternative manner without exposure to the hazard?
- How severe is the risk presented by the hazard?

The identification process:

- Considers each strategy, activity, or function.
- Looks at what is critical to the success of that strategy, activity or function; and then
- Considers what may go wrong.

This is defined as the risk. Assessing the risk refers to the probability of an incident and the severity of the consequence of such an incident. Once the hazards have been identified, the associated risks should be assessed to determine what they are and how serious a risk they present. Identifying the risk is the first step in assessing it.

An example of putting all of the above together:

Event:

- An excursion that involves crossing a road to a children's playground.

Benefits for learning:

- Identification of potential traffic hazards and using a traffic crossing
- Opportunity to foster the development of upper body strength
- Opportunity to enhance social skills through contact with others at the playground

Hazard:

- Crossing the street

Risk:

- Possible injury or death caused by being hit by a car

Factors affecting the likelihood and severity of risk:

- Volume of traffic, speed of traffic, existing controls, such as crossings, type of road (highway, residential street, major road, etc), weather conditions that may affect visibility, mobility of the children, any items that require carriage (e.g. bags, blankets, first aid kits, etc).

Risk management strategies:

- Use the crossing, obey all signals, support children to cross together, use a stroller to assist with the infant and place all essential items into a back-pack type bag for easy carriage.





Activity 1: Identifying hazards and risks:

If the picture above was the art preparation and storage area for the educator’s playgroup, would you utilise it?

Yes No

Why?

Why not?

Identify at least two of the hazards evident:

What are the risks of these two hazards?

Each risk must be assessed to determine its potential to cause harm or injury. The risk assessment examines the probability of an incident, and the severity or consequence of such an incident, presented by the identification of a particular hazard. Establishing the probability and severity will assist in rating each risk and placing a priority on their management, e.g. high risk, medium risk, low or negligible risk, etc. By cross-referencing the probability and severity ratings, a risk level can be determined.

Level of Risk: Example 1

Probability x severity	Frequent A	Probable B	Occasional C	Remote D	Improbable E
Catastrophic 1	High	High	High	High	High
Critical 2	High	High	High	Medium	low
Marginal 3	High	Medium	Medium	Low	Low
Negligible 4	Medium	Low	Low	Low	low

Hazard Severity Rating – (vertical on table) ↑

1. Catastrophic – Hazard may result in death or total loss of bodily functions
2. Critical – Hazard may cause severe injury or illness
3. Marginal –Hazard may cause injury or illness resulting in absence from the care environment by either children or the educator
4. Negligible – May cause minor injury or illness.

Hazard Probability Rating – (horizontal on table) →

1. Frequent – Likely to occur frequently
2. Probable – Would occur, not frequently
3. Occasional – Could happen occasionally
4. Remote – Rare, not likely – possible
5. Improbable – Highly unlikely – possible.

There are many examples of tables available to help assess the level of risk. More examples are available in Appendix 1.

Risks that are considered to be high or rated at level 1 are the risks that should be controlled immediately, or the decision may be to not undertake the event or occasion. When deciding if participation will occur for risks identified as low or at levels 4, and potentially as medium or at level 3, then considering the benefits to children should be part of the decision making process. The benefits to children focus on their potential for learning through engagement with the event or occasion.



Will participation provide an opportunity that is not possible by another mechanism?

The likelihood of occurrence may be affected by how often exposure occurs, how long the exposure is for and how many people are exposed. Risk assessments can also include the individual skills and experience of the people involved in the event or occasion, as well as whether a combination of hazards exist.

Using the level of risk example 1:

1. Consider an event that you would like children to participate for example, visit to the beach, visit to the local park or playgroup.
2. What are the benefits for children's learning from participating in this event?
3. Write down a hazard that is likely to be presented by participation in the event.
4. For the hazard consider how it could injure a child?
5. List all of the possible consequences.
6. Select the most likely consequence.
7. Rank its severity by using the categories within the chosen example table. (Blank copies of other risk matrix provided in the next section)
8. For this consequence consider how likely it is to happen?
9. Rate the likelihood by using one of the categories in the example table selected.
10. A priority rating level or number is evident where the severity and likelihood levels connect.
11. Is the rating level worthy of the benefits for learning presented to children?

Discuss your scenario with a colleague or coordinator allowing them the opportunity to provide feedback regarding your assessment.

Identifying hazards is the starting point for the hazard management process.

The second step of the hazard management process, risk assessment, is generally carried out at the same time as hazards are identified. Risk assessment is the process of evaluating the probability or likelihood of an injury occurring and the severity or consequences of the injury. The underlying principle of this is to determine which hazard should be controlled first and to determine the amount of control required. Once this is determined the third step of the process can be carried out.

The third step is the management of the risk.

What is risk management?

Risk management is a methodical process that identifies workplace health and safety issues and requires the elimination or systematic control of the issue. The systematic control is based on an assessment of the associated risk and is dependent on the best means available, in order to prevent work-related injury and illness. Risk management allows for continuation of events or occasions where a risk has been identified. It reduces the level of risk to the lowest possible level. Decisions about risk management may be supported through consulting others who have a higher level of expertise, or knowledge, in certain areas; that is a recognised authority. This could include for example, consulting with;

- a glazier regarding glass and/or glazing where there are any concerns;
- a building surveyor (or similar) regarding fencing concerns;
- a gym instructor regarding the Australian Standard and the safe use of trampolines; and
- the owner/operator of any excursion destinations that appear to require a level of expert knowledge regarding equipment, animals, etc.



Managing risk involves controlling or eliminating it. This can be done by using the hierarchy of control, a tool that provides six different approaches to control the identified risk. The hierarchy of control begins with the most preferred approach and ends with the least.

- **Elimination** – remove the hazard altogether.
- **Substitution** – substitute the hazard with one that is less hazardous.
- **Isolation** – reduce the risks posed by the hazard by isolating it.
- **Engineering** – put engineering controls in place to reduce the risks posed by the hazard.
- **Administration** – implement administrative measures to minimise the risks posed by the hazard, e.g. signage, policies/ procedures.
- **Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)** – require others, including children, to wear safety equipment to minimise risks.

Managing risk is also about the relationships between educators and children, and between individual children within the group. This includes considering the self-esteem of each child and providing environments that foster its development.

Allowing or providing for a level of risk taking does not necessarily mean the event or occasion is unsafe. It can for example mean that opportunities for challenging play are allowed and can follow the course as determined by the participants themselves. The educator supervises and intervenes only when an immediate unexpected or unmanageable risk is identified, or a child requires some support to either remove themselves from the experience, or to be allowed to continue in its progression. It becomes either a real safety issue as perceived to an imagined one or a participant is showing evidence of feeling unsafe, or excluded.

Managing the risk, using the hierarchy as noted above, allows for clear decisions to be made. It is often a combination of the above controls that are needed to minimise, in as far as practical, the likelihood of harm or injury.



Key points:

Benefits for learning:

Record the benefits for learning on each risk assessment.

Spot the Hazard:

A hazard is anything that could cause harm or injury.

Assess the risk:

Assessing the risk means working out how likely it is that a hazard will harm or injure someone and how serious the harm or injury could be. The assessment may be made in consultation with someone who is a recognised expert, or a high level of detailed knowledge, in a particular area.

Manage or control the risk:

The best way to fix a hazard is to get rid of it altogether. This is not always possible, but hazards may be made less dangerous by looking at the possible control measures:

- Elimination
- Substitution
- Isolation
- Engineering (safeguards)
- Administrative
- Using personal protective equipment and clothing (PPE)

Remember:

- It is difficult to prove you had no control over an incidence
- Ignorance is no excuse
- Evidence of clear and logical documented risk identification and hazard management plans help reduce your exposure to possible litigation occurring
- The onus of proof is to prove you did all that you reasonably could to prevent the incident from occurring:

You:

- Identified the hazard;
- Assessed the risk;
- Eliminated or controlled the risk; and
- Reviewed the process



Reviewing the process:

Risk management plans should be reviewed on an ongoing process, not just a one-off exercise. Regularly evaluating the effectiveness of the management measures currently in place with a view to ongoing continuous quality improvement will help ensure the risk assessment stays up to date. When reviewing the risk assessment, consider the following:

- Have there been any changes?
- Are there improvements you still need to make?
- Has a problem been identified by anyone, including the children attending the education and care setting?
- Have there been any accidents or near misses that may require changes to an existing risk management plan, or the development of a new one?

Reviewing risk assessments and their management plans will assist in ensuring the ongoing provision of a safe environment and minimise the risk of injury or illness to all stakeholders. Keeping copies of reviewed risk management plans and having them available upon request, will provide evidence of consideration toward the test of reasonableness within the duty of care context:

- Have you done what is reasonable under the circumstances to manage i.e. prevent or minimise the risk? The ‘reasonableness test’ recommended rating scale is as follows:

- **Excellent** – Doing more than what a reasonable person would be expected to do in the circumstances.
- **Adequate** – Doing only what a reasonable person would be expected to do in the circumstances.
- **Inadequate** – Doing less than what a reasonable person would be expected to do in the circumstances

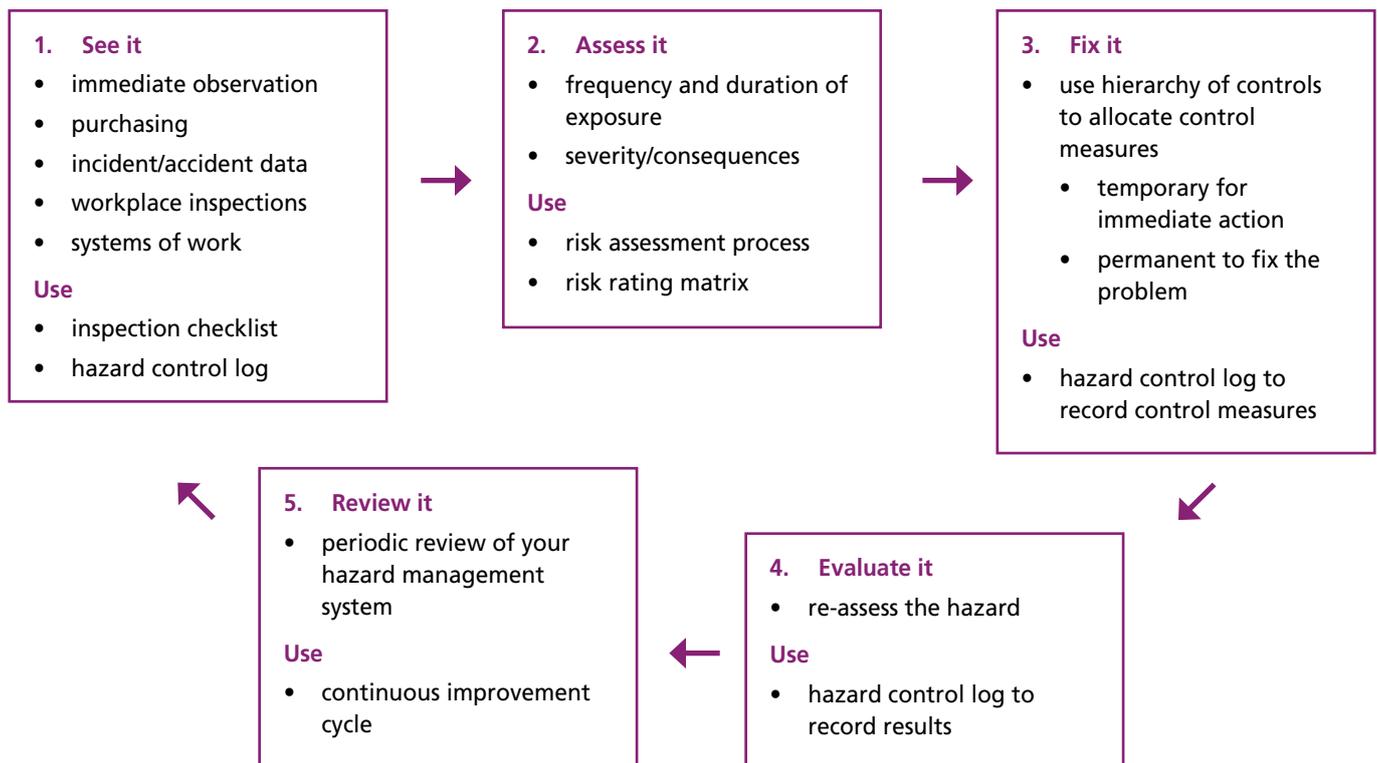
During the year if there is a significant change, it is reasonable to expect that the risk assessment has been checked and where necessary amended. If possible it is best to think about the risk assessment when planning the change thus maximising the potential for more flexibility. A measure adopted in the past may no longer be sufficiently achieved, following a significant change, or in fact may no longer be required. In each situation it is important to document the decision and the reasons behind it.

A summary of the overall approach:

A simple way of describing the hazard management process is the SAFER approach:

1. **S** ee it (identifying hazards)
2. **A** ssess it (risk assessment)
3. **F** ix it (risk management)
4. **E** valuate it (evaluation)
5. **R** eview it (review)

SAFER process flowchart:





Attitudes to risk:

Risk management is being risk aware, not risk averse. Risk is ever present and some amount of risk taking is inevitable. Risk management is about effectively managing risks that could affect the operations of the education and care service. By being 'risk aware' a better position is held in relation to avoiding threats and taking advantage of opportunities.

There are many different attitudes to risk. What is an acceptable risk to one adult or child might not be acceptable to another. One educator might be very happy to allow children to climb trees to the point where the child feels insecure and asks for help, while another might become anxious and prevent children from even attempting to climb it!

Being aware of individual attitudes and ideas to risk, can help influence the way in which it is approached. Risk is often perceived as a negative, but can in fact offer many positive outcomes, particularly for children. Warden (2009) asserts that being risk aware as compared to risk averse, being able to employ a sense of perspective when assessing risks as risk, will provide opportunities for children to;

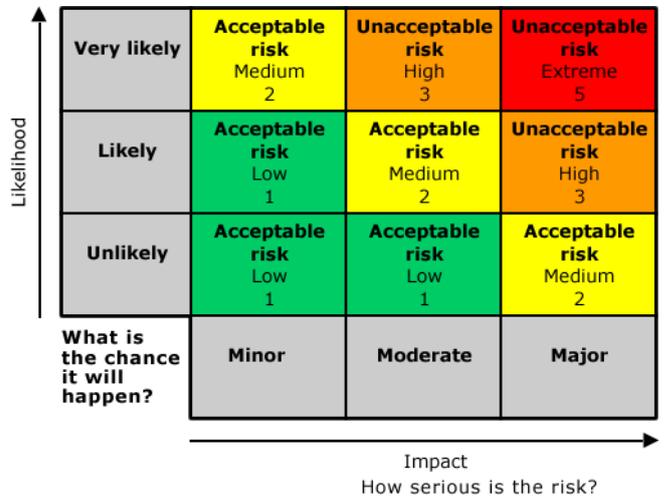
- become strong stakeholders in their own development
- show an increase in confidence and competence,
- become independent and responsible for their own actions.
- develop;
 - coping mechanisms
 - problem solving capabilities and
 - transferable skills which also increases their self esteem and self belief
 - a respect for danger, hazards and experimentation.

Differing attitudes and ideas about risk can also mean that there are different risk appetites amongst coordinators and educators. Risk appetite is the foundation of an effective risk management system underpinned by understanding the amount of risk that management is prepared to accept in pursuit of goals or outcomes. Risk appetite can be an extra guide to risk management strategies and can also help deal with risks. It is usually expressed as an acceptable/unacceptable level of risk.

Some questions to ask are:

- What risks are acceptable?
- What risks are not acceptable?
- What risks can be treated on a case by case basis?
- What risks will be sent to a higher level for a decision?

All risk matrixes can be used to show the risk appetite of a business by implementing clear guidelines as to what assessment levels can be considered appropriate. An example is shown following:



Medium risks, or those rated at 2 or lower, are considered acceptable risks. Those rated as 3 or high level and above, are unacceptable risks. Clearly identifying the risk appetite in this manner assists in decisions being made in line with the expectations of the service.

The risk appetite should help with decisions about levels of risk that are acceptable. These decisions will be influenced by personal values and beliefs also. Having clear policies, procedures about risk identification and management including a clear expression of the risk appetite will ensure informed decisions are made. It is not possible to tell individuals what risks are appropriate to them. What is possible is for the service to clearly articulate what level of risk it is willing to tolerate as part of its operations.

The following questions may help individuals better understand their personal position in relation to risk taking:



What are your personal boundaries?

Do you believe:

- | | | |
|--|-----|----|
| • Embracing risk makes you more secure. | Yes | No |
| • Risk taking is exciting. | Yes | No |
| • Risk taking is fun. | Yes | No |
| • Risk is scary. | Yes | No |
| • Risk is dangerous. | Yes | No |
| • Risk is a threat to your security and peace of mind. | Yes | No |

Think about:

- What risk taking means to you?
- Has risk taking been more positive or negative for you?
- What are the up and downsides of taking risks?
What risks scare you the most?
- How could you become a better risk taker?
- If you took more risks would you have more personal success?
- On a scale of 1-9, 9 being biggest, where do you rate as a risk taker?
- Where would your family and friends rate you on the same scale?

Overarching questions to guide reflection:

- Who is advantaged in my decisions relating to risk taking and the children attending my service?
- Who is disadvantaged when I make decisions in this way?
- Is the voice and expertise of the children and their families considered when I make decisions about risk taking?
- What am I confronted by?
- Is there a different way I can make decisions? What would this be?
- How can the education and care service be enhanced through the provision of experiences for children and their families that provide opportunity for the EYLF/ FSAC outcomes to be fostered?





Related Law, Regulations and Standards

The National Law Section 167 requires that the Approved Provider must ensure that every reasonable precaution is taken to protect children from harm and from any hazard likely to cause injury. Although it is clearly outlined in the Guide to the National Law and National Regulations specific circumstances that require a risk assessment to be undertaken, it is important that we think more broadly and undertake this process when assessing the suitability of an experience, an event or a particular circumstance.

In deciding when a risk assessment should be conducted, it is important to consider the test of **adequate reasonableness**:

Doing only what a reasonable person would be expected to do in the circumstances.

There are no guarantees available on what is considered reasonable in any situation. There are many variables that will impact on the decision:

- Ages and numbers of children attending the service.
- The age and experience of the educator.
- The circumstances surrounding the event; and
- What plans had been in place to minimize the likelihood of harm and hazard being present.

This means there will be circumstances where individual educators will have to make the decision regarding conducting a risk assessment. Assessing the risk means working out how likely it is that a hazard will harm or injure someone and how serious the harm or injury could be. The assessment may be made in consultation with someone who is a recognised expert, or has a high level of detailed knowledge, in a particular area. This can include other people involved in the family day care service.

While the Approved provider of the family day care service must have policies and procedures in place to support the protection of children from harm and hazards, including health and safety matters, individual circumstances will warrant educators using their own professional judgment, based on their experience and professional development, to assess and manage any hazards presented, thus minimizing the risk of harm to children. This includes educators making considered decisions regarding any additional strategies that may be needed to ensure the health, safety and well-being of the children are protected, in the following circumstances: (Note: This is not an exhaustive list. Individuals will need to consider their own circumstances in deciding when a risk assessment is required):

- The provision of familiar experiences to children when a new child attends the service: will the new child be aware of the expectations; will the group dynamics and behaviours change?
- The provision of new experiences, particularly where these involve items children may not have a level of familiarity with, for example hot glue guns, hammers for woodwork, wax for candle making, hot ovens for cooking with children, etc.
- The types of incursions organised, that is, visits to the family day care educators premise or venue, by other individuals or groups, for a specific purpose such as dog

safety awareness with Delta Dogs, heightening awareness of snakes with the Reptile Man, etc.

- The visit to the family day care premise by other adults and/ or children. For example when arranging for a prospective family to the service factors such as other children in care, the time the visit occurs, the experiences available for other children during the visit, and the number of children and other adults on the premise or at the venue must be considered when assessing the likelihood of harm and hazard to children.

Making and documenting, considered decisions assists in; reducing the level of exposure to the occurrence of possible accidents to children; assists in a quality educational program being available for children; and minimizes the likelihood of litigation occurring. It is also important when undertaking risk assessment, that a benefit risk assessment is also undertaken. A Benefit Risk Assessment:

- Can give children freedom.
- Support children to feel empowered.
- Support educators to feel empowered.
- Gives children, families and educators a voice.
- Expands opportunities.

A test of adequate reasonableness should be viewed as providing minimum evidence that a reasonable person did what would be expected in the circumstances. The National Quality Framework is a continuous improvement system, and therefore family day care educators should be striving to meet the excellent reasonable test:

Excellent – Doing more than what a reasonable person would be expected to do in the circumstances.

The roles and responsibilities of educators are evolving at a rapid rate and these are underpinned by the objectives of the National Quality Framework and the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) Vision that:

By 2020 all children have the best start in life to create a better future for themselves, and for the nation.

Children deserve to achieve the very highest of educational outcomes and this will only be possible where educators are highly skilled and able to make informed decisions, exercise professional judgement and are able to clearly articulate their pedagogy, that is, professional practice, especially those that involve building and nurturing relationships, program decision-making, teaching and learning). As the National Quality Framework moves toward meeting its own objective, there will be improved public knowledge about and access to information about the quality of services to parents, carers and the general public, to help inform decisions it will be more important that family day care educators and staff members are meeting the objectives of the National Quality Framework and the requirements of the National Law, National Regulations and the National Quality Standard.

Appendix 1

The following section, Appendix 1, provides examples of:

Risk Matrix

Risk identification and assessment tools

Appendix 1:

Risk Matrix Example

LIKELIHOOD	CONSEQUENCE				
	insignificant 1	minor 2	moderate 3	major 4	catastrophic 5
almost certain 5	moderate	high	high	extreme	extreme
likely 4	moderate	moderate	high	extreme	extreme
moderate 3	low	moderate	high	high	extreme
unlikely 2	low	low	moderate	high	high
rare 1	low	low	low	moderate	high



Risk Matrix Example

How severely could it hurt someone OR How ill could it make someone	Very likely Could happen anytime	Likely could happen sometime	Unlikely could happen, but very rarely	Very unlikely could happen but probably never would
Kill or cause permanent disability or ill health	1	1	2	3
Serious injury or long term illness	1	2	3	4
Medical attention and several days off work	2	3	4	5
First aid needed	3	4	5	6

Example 1: RISK ASSESSMENT SUMMARY

Topic:

Date:

Issue Number

Review Date:

1. Identify Risks	2. Analyse Risks 3. Evaluate Risks			4. Identify and evaluate existing risk controls.			5. Further Risk Treatments
Risk (people, information, physical assets and finances, reputation)	Consequence	Likelihood	Risk level	What we are doing now to manage this risk.	Effectiveness of our strategies	New risk level	Further action needed Opportunities for improvement

The RISK ASSESSMENT SUMMARY provides documentation of efficient management practice. File appropriately. File Location:





Example 2:

Risk Assessment Date: _____ Date to be reviewed: _____

Identified Hazard: _____

Risks presented by hazard: _____

Benefits to learning: _____

How severely could it hurt someone OR How ill could it make someone	Very likely Could happen anytime	Likely could happen sometime	Unlikely could happen, but very rarely	Very unlikely could happen but probably never would
Kill or cause permanent disability or ill health	1	1	2	3
Serious injury or long term illness	1	2	3	4
Medical attention and several days off work	2	3	4	5
First aid needed	3	4	5	6

Management Strategies: _____

Name: _____

Signature: _____

Position: _____



Example 3:

Risk Assessment Date: _____

Date to be reviewed: _____

Identified Hazard: _____

Risks presented by hazard: _____

Benefits to learning: _____

LIKELIHOOD	CONSEQUENCE				
	insignificant 1	minor 2	moderate 3	major 4	catastrophic 5
almost certain 5	moderate	high	high	extreme	extreme
likely 4	moderate	moderate	high	extreme	extreme
moderate 3	low	moderate	high	high	extreme
unlikely 2	low	low	moderate	high	high
rare 1	low	low	low	moderate	high

Management Strategies: _____

Name: _____ Signature: _____

Position: _____



Example 4:

Risk Assessment Date: _____ Date to be reviewed: _____

Identified Hazard: _____

Risks presented by hazard: _____

Benefits to learning: _____

Probability x severity	Frequent A	Probable B	Occasional C	Remote D	Improbable E
Catastrophic 1	High	High	High	High	High
Critical 2	High	High	High	Medium	low
Marginal 3	High	Medium	Medium	Low	Low
Negligible 4	Medium	Low	Low	Low	low

Management Strategies: _____

Name: _____

Signature: _____

Position: _____



Example 5: Work Sheet

What are the benefits to children's learning?

Where does risk come from?	What is the risk?	Owner?	Control?	Consequence?	Likelihood?	Rating?	Treatment?



Appendix 2: Scenarios

The below mentioned scenarios can be used within a scheme meeting as a professional learning opportunity and to engage together in the process using your preferred template.

1. A family day educator decides that they would like to incorporate a small fish pond into a section of the outdoor play area that is not utilised very much. The pond would be for children to sit beside and watch the fish, to learn about the life cycle of fish and hopefully to introduce tadpoles at some point. Is a fish pond appropriate in this area if potential drowning is identified as a hazard?
2. A family day care educator would like to utilize an area of her residence that has not been registered previously. The area has large windows that wind outward to the approved outdoor area. The windows have no locking mechanisms. Can the area be accessed if possible escape from the window and the possibility of children playing outdoors running into the window are identified as hazards?
3. The family day care service has been asked to provide some play equipment for the purposes of an indoor playgroup at a local hall. Some of the equipment is marked as 'suitable for outdoor use only'. If using it indoors presents a hazard, can it still be utilised?
4. The family day care service is registering a new educator. The paling fence surrounding the outdoor area is 980mm high, with the horizontal beams on the outside part of the area. The house is located in a very quiet cul-de-sac with no through traffic. The fence is less than the old Home-Based Care Standards required. Does a 20mm deficit represent a hazard? If it does what level is the risk? Does this change if the house is positioned on an extremely busy major road?
5. A family day care educator has a large outdoor balcony directly accessible from the main play area of the house. The balcony is enclosed by a barrier that prevents children going over, under or through it. There is often outdoor furniture in place on the balcony including movable chairs. Would the chairs present a hazard? If so, what may some of the management strategies include?
6. A family day care educator has extended her backyard. The yard is fully enclosed and now contains two large trees. One of the trees has low branches that can be used as footholds to climb. The educators seek advice from the Scheme as to whether children are allowed to climb trees or not. What would be the process to ensure a reasonable decision was made.



The following are two examples of completed risk assessment tools based on further scenarios:

Scenario 1:

Jenny has been family day educator for almost 3 years. She has decided she would like to provide a fully enclosed trampoline as part of her regular outdoor play environment. Trampolines have not been permitted under the old Home Based Care Standards. The identified hazard is the likelihood of injury to children due to a lack of knowledge regarding correct techniques for usage.

Jenny is a highly motivated educator and reads the relevant Australian Standard and conducts a large level of research as part of the decision making process before deciding to buy the trampoline, including a lengthy discussion with the local gym instructor who has responsibility for teaching children how to use the trampoline.

Benefits to children’s learning:

Children have opportunity to foster large muscle control, to wait for their turn and to take turns. Children also have an additional experience on offer in the outdoor play environment.

Using example 3:

How severely could it hurt someone OR How ill could it make someone	Very likely Could happen anytime	Likely could happen sometime	Unlikely could happen, but very rarely	Very unlikely could happen but probably never would
Kill or cause permanent disability or ill health	1	1	2	3
Serious injury or long term illness	1	2	3	4
Medical attention and several days off work	2	3	4	5
First aid needed	3	4	5	6

Management Strategies:

- To follow ALL recommended safety strategies accompanying the trampoline upon purchase.
- To closely supervise the trampoline at all times it is in use.
- To allow only one child on the trampoline at a time.
- To time-limit the experience to no longer than 10 minutes per child; and
- To monitor the group dynamics before suggesting using the trampoline on any day.

Scenario 2:

During the initial assessment of a potential family day care educators premises it is noted there is a large in-ground pool in the back yard, securely fenced and not filled with water. The potential educator confirms the pool has not been used for several years and the family is considering what to do with it in the future.

If the pool is not used, is it still considered a pool and the Tasmanian prohibition applies?

If it is not a pool, what are the hazards?

Using example 6: What are the benefits to children's learning?

Children have access to a larger outdoor area, allowing opportunity for large motor skill play to be provided.

Where does risk come from?	What is the risk?	Owner?	Control?	Consequence?	Likelihood?	Rating?	Treatment?
Pooling/ ponding of water	Children drowning	Service or Educator	Educator	Catastrophic	Unlikely (Due to secure fencing)	High	Prevent the ponding/ pooling: e.g. Drainage Fill with product of some sort

Children can be supervised appropriately in all outdoors area, thus allowing for separation into various defined learning areas.

Notes: The family day care coordinator sought advice from the Regulatory Authority as well as local government, as part of the decision making process.



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