BEACONSFIELD KINDERGARTEN INC
OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICY

Mandatory – Quality Area 3

PURPOSE

This policy will provide guidelines and procedures to ensure that:

- all people who attend the premises of Beaconsfield Kindergarten, including employees, children, parents/guardians, students, volunteers, contractors and visitors, are provided with a safe and healthy environment
- all reasonable steps are taken by the Approved Provider, as the employer of staff, to ensure the health, safety and wellbeing of employees at the service.

POLICY STATEMENT

VALUES

Beaconsfield Kindergarten Inc. has a moral and legal responsibility to provide a safe and healthy environment for employees, children, parents/guardians, students, volunteers, contractors and visitors. This policy reflects the importance Beaconsfield Kindergarten Inc. places on the wellbeing of employees, children, parents/guardians, students, volunteers, contractors and visitors, by endeavouring to protect their health, safety and welfare, and integrating this commitment into all of its activities.

Beaconsfield Kindergarten Inc. is committed to ensuring that:

- the management group, staff and volunteers are aware of their health and safety responsibilities as employers, employees and volunteers
- systematic identification, assessment and control of hazards is undertaken at the service
- effective communication and consultation form a fundamental part of the management process to encourage innovative ways of reducing risk in the service environment
- training is provided to assist staff to identify health and safety hazards which, when addressed, will lead to safer work practices at the service
- it fulfils its obligations under current and future laws (in particular, the *Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004*), and that all relevant codes of practice are adopted and accepted as a minimum standard.

SCOPE

This policy applies to the Approved Provider, Persons with Management or Control, Nominated Supervisors, Persons in day-to-day Charge, educators, staff, students on placement, volunteers, parents/guardians, children, contractors, visitors and others attending the programs and activities of Beaconsfield Kindergarten Inc, including during offsite excursions and activities.

RESPONSIBILITIES

RESPONSIBILITIES	Approved provider and persons with management or control	Nominated supervisor and persons in day-to-day charge	Early childhood teacher, educators and all other staff	Parents/guardians	Contractors, volunteers and students
R indicates legislation requirement, and should not be deleted					
Providing and maintaining a work environment that is safe and without risks to health *(OHS Act: Section 21)*. This includes ensuring that: • there are safe systems of work • all plant and equipment provided for use by staff, including machinery, appliances and tools etc., are safe and meet relevant safety standards • substances, and plant and equipment, are used, handled, and stored safely • material safety data sheets are supplied for all chemicals kept and/or used at the service • there are adequate welfare facilities e.g. first aid and dining facilities etc. • there is appropriate information, instruction, training and supervision for employees **Note:** This duty of care is owed to all employees, children, parents/guardians, volunteers, students, contractors and any members of the public who are at the workplace at any time	**R**	√			
Ensuring there is a systematic risk management approach to the management of workplace hazards. This includes ensuring that: • hazards and risks to health and safety are identified, assessed and eliminated or, if it is not possible to remove the hazard/risk completely, effectively controlled • measures employed to eliminate/control hazards and risks to health and safety are monitored and evaluated regularly	**R**	√			
Organising/facilitating regular safety audits of the following: • indoor and outdoor environments • all equipment, including emergency equipment • playgrounds and fixed equipment in outdoor environments • cleaning services • horticultural maintenance • pest control	**R**	√			
Ensuring that all cupboards/rooms are labelled accordingly, including those that contain chemicals and first aid kits, and that child-proof locks are installed on doors and cupboards where contents may be harmful	**R**	√			

Ensuring the physical environment at the service is safe, secure and free from hazards for everyone at the service *(refer to Child Safe Environment Policy)*	**R**	√	√		√
Ensuring that all equipment and materials used at the service meet relevant safety standards	**R**	√	√		√
Ensuring that all plant, equipment and furniture are maintained in a safe condition *(Regulation 103)*	**R**	√	√		√
Maintaining a clean environment daily, and removing tripping/slipping hazards as soon as these become apparent	**R**	√	√		√
Ensuring the service is up to date with current legislation on child restraints in vehicles if transporting children *(refer to Road Safety and Safe Transport Policy)*	**R**	√			
Monitoring the conditions of the workplace and the health of employees *(OHS Act: Section 22)*	**R**	√	√		√
Taking care of their own safety and the safety of others who may be affected by their actions	**R**	√	√		√
Involving children in conversations regarding OHS and incorporating OHS into the curriculum.		√	√		√
Protecting other individuals from risks arising from the service's activities, including holding a fete or a working bee etc., or any activity that is ancillary to the operation of the service e.g. contractors cleaning the premises after hours *(OHS Act: Section 23)*	**R**	√	√		√
Providing adequate instruction to staff in safe working procedures, and informing them of known hazards to their health and wellbeing that are associated with the work that they perform at the service	**R**	√	√		
Developing procedures to guide the safe use of harmful substances, such as chemicals, in the workplace	**R**	√			
Ensuring that OHS accountability is included in all position descriptions	**R**	√			
Ensuring this policy is available to employees, parents/guardian, students, volunteers, contractors and displayed in a prominent location.	**R**	√			
Allocating adequate resources to implement this policy	**R**	√			
Implementing/practising emergency and evacuation procedures *(refer to Emergency and Evacuation Policy)*	**R**	√	√		√
Implementing and reviewing this policy in consultation with the nominated supervisor, educators, staff, contractors and parents/guardians	**R**	√	√	√	√
Identifying and providing appropriate resources, induction and training to assist educators, staff, contractors, visitors, volunteers and students to implement this policy	**R**	√			
Ensuring the nominated supervisor, educators, staff, contractors, volunteers and students are kept informed of any relevant changes in legislation and practices in relation to this policy	**R**				
Consulting appropriately with employees on OHS matters including: • identification of hazards • making decisions on how to manage and control health and safety risks • making decisions on health and safety procedures	**R**	√			

• the need for establishing an OHS committee and determining membership of the committee • proposed changes at the service that may impact on health and safety • establishing health and safety committees					
Co-operating with reasonable OHS actions taken by the approved provider, including: • following OHS rules and guidelines • helping to ensure housekeeping is of the standard set out in service policies • attending OHS training as required • reporting OHS incidents • co-operating with OHS investigations • encouraging good OHS practices with fellow employees and others attending the service • assisting the approved provider with tasks relating to OHS, such as conducting OHS inspections during working hours		√	√	√	√
Developing and complying with procedures to protect the health and safety of all staff, visitors and children at the service during health emergencies such as a pandemic	√	√	√	√	√
Notifying WorkSafe Victoria about serious workplace incidents, and preserving the site of an incident *(OHS Act: Sections 38–39)*	**R**	√			
Holding appropriate licenses, registrations and permits, where required by the OHS Act	**R**	√			
Attempting to resolve OHS issues with employees or their representatives within a reasonable time frame	**R**	√			
Not discriminating against employees who are involved in health and safety negotiations	**R**	√			
Allowing access to an authorised representative of a staff member who is acting within their powers under the OHS Act	**R**	√			
Producing OHS documentation as required by inspectors and answering any questions that an inspector asks	**R**	√			
Not obstructing, misleading or intimidating an inspector who is performing their duties.	**R**	√			
Ensuring that all educators/staff are aware of this policy, and are supported to implement it at the service	**R**	√			
Keeping up to date and complying with any relevant changes in legislation and practices in relation to this policy.	**R**	√	√		√
Ensuring a report is completed if a hazard is identified or a near miss occurs	√	√	√		
Ensuring that all incident reports and hazards or near misses are discussed at termly centre meetings to identify any consistent injuries/hazards, why these might be occurring and how they can be managed.	√	√	√		

BACKGROUND AND LEGISLATION

Background

Everyone involved in an early childhood education and care service has a role to play in ensuring the service's operations are safe and without risk to the health and safety of all parties. In Victoria, health and safety in the workplace is governed by a system of laws, regulations and compliance codes that set out the responsibilities of employers and employees to ensure safety is maintained at work.

The *Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004* (*OHS Act*) sets out the key principles, duties and rights in relation to workplace health and safety. The *Occupational Health and Safety Regulations 2017* specify the ways duties imposed by the *OHS Act* must be undertaken and prescribe procedural/administrative matters to support the *OHS Act*, such as requiring licenses for specific activities, or the need to keep records or notify authorities on certain matters.

The legal duties of an **employer** under the *OHS Act* are:

- to provide and maintain a workplace that is safe and without risk to the health of employees. This responsibility extends to contractors for routine tasks over which the employer has management. For contractors completing non-routine tasks, the employer must ensure that the service's daily operations and layout do not pose unreasonable risks
- to ensure other individuals, such as families and visitors, are not exposed to health and safety risks arising from the organisation's activities
- to consult with employees about OHS matters that will, or will likely, affect employees directly, including identifying hazards and assessing risks, and making decisions about risk control measures.

The *OHS Act* places the responsibility on **employees** for:

- taking care of their own safety and the safety of others who may be affected by their actions
- co-operating with reasonable OHS actions taken by the employer, including following guidelines, attending OHS-related training, reporting incidents, co-operating with OHS investigations, encouraging good OHS practice with fellow employees and others at the service, and assisting the employer with conducting OHS inspections during operating hours
- not interfering with safety equipment provided at the service, such as fire extinguishers.

Legislation and standards

Relevant legislation and standards include but are not limited to:

- *Accident Compensation Act 1985* (Vic)
- *AS/NZS 4804:2001 and 4801:2001 Occupational health and safety systems*
- *Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010*
- *Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011*
- *National Quality Standard*, Quality Area 2: Children's Health and Safety
- *National Quality Standard*, Quality Area 3: Physical Environment
- *National Quality Standard*, Quality Area 7: Governance and Leadership
- *Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004*
- *Occupational Health and Safety Regulations 2007*

The most current amendments to listed legislation can be found at:

- Victorian Legislation – Victorian Law Today: http://www.legislation.vic.gov.au/
- Commonwealth Legislation – ComLaw: http://www.comlaw.gov.au/

DEFINITIONS

The terms defined in this section relate specifically to this policy. For commonly used terms e.g. Approved Provider, Nominated Supervisor, Regulatory Authority etc. refer to the *General Definitions* section of this manual.

Duty of care: A common law concept that refers to the responsibilities of organisations to provide people with an adequate level of protection against harm and all reasonably foreseeable risk of injury. In the context of this policy, duty of care refers to the responsibility of education and care services to provide children, staff, students, volunteers, contractors and anyone visiting the service with an adequate level of care and protection against reasonably foreseeable harm and injury.

Hazard: An element with the potential to cause death, injury, illness or disease.

Hazard identification: A process that involves identifying all foreseeable hazards in the workplace and understanding the possible harm that each hazard may cause.

Hazard management: A structured process of hazard identification, risk assessment and control, aimed at providing safe and healthy conditions for employees, contractors and visitors while on the premises of Beaconsfield Kindergarten or while engaged in activities endorsed by Beaconsfield Kindergarten.

Harm: Includes death, or injury, illness (physical or psychological) or disease that may be suffered by a person as a consequence of exposure to a hazard.

Material safety data sheet: Provides employees and emergency personnel with safety procedures for working with toxic or dangerous materials. The data sheet includes all relevant information about the material such as physical properties (e.g. melting/boiling point, toxicity and reactivity), health effects, first aid requirements and safe handling procedures (e.g. personal protective equipment, safe storage/disposal and management of spills).

OHS committee: A committee that facilitates co-operation between an employer and employees in instigating, developing and carrying out measures designed to ensure the health and safety of employees in the workplace. At Beaconsfield Kindergarten, the Leadership Team also act as the OHS committee.

Risk: The chance (likelihood) that a hazard will cause harm to individuals.

Risk assessment: A process for developing knowledge/understanding about hazards and risks so that sound decisions can be made about the control of hazards. Risk assessments assist in determining:

- what levels of harm can occur
- how harm can occur
- the likelihood that harm will occur.

Risk control: A measure, work process or system that eliminates an OHS hazard or risk, or if this is not possible, reduces the risk so far as is reasonably practicable.

SOURCES AND RELATED POLICIES

Sources

- *Early Childhood Management Manual*, ELAA
- OHS in Early Childhood Services (ELAA): www.ohsinecservices.org.au
- Risk Assessment and Management Tool, ACECQA: www.acecqa.gov.au
- WorkSafe Victoria: www.worksafe.vic.gov.au

Service policies

- *Child Safe Environment Policy*
- *Code of Conduct Policy*

- *Emergency and Evacuation Policy*
- *Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Policy*
- *Participation of Volunteers and Students Policy*
- *Privacy and Confidentiality Policy*
- *Road Safety and Safe Transport Policy*
- *Staffing Policy*

EVALUATION

In order to assess whether the values and purposes of the policy have been achieved, the Approved Provider will:

- regularly seek feedback from everyone affected by the policy regarding its effectiveness, particularly in relation to identifying and responding to occupational health and safety issues
- monitor the implementation, compliance, complaints and incidents in relation to this policy
- keep the policy up to date with current legislation, research, policy and best practice
- revise the policy and procedures as part of the service's policy review cycle, or as required
- notify parents/guardians at least 14 days before making any changes to this policy or its procedures, unless a lesser period is necessary due to risk (*Regulation 172(2)*).

ATTACHMENTS

- Attachment 1: Children's Services – Occupational Health and Safety Compliance Kit

AUTHORISATION

This policy was adopted by the Approved Provider of Beaconsfield Kindergarten Inc. on 17th March, 2014.

REVIEW DATE: 9/10/2022

REVIEW FREQUENCY: Annual

NEXT REVIEW DUE: October 2024

WorkSafe VICTORIA

Children's services – occupational health and safety compliance kit:

How to control the risks from the most common hazardous tasks in the children's services sector

Victorian workers returning home safe every day

About this kit

This kit has been developed in response to requests for practical advice about:

1. the main hazardous tasks that cause workplace injuries in centre-based services for children aged under six years old (eg childcare centres and kindergartens).
2. how to control the risks associated with these tasks to prevent injuries and comply with the *Occupational Health and Safety Act* 2004 (OHS Act).

This kit describes the **six most common hazardous tasks** that cause workplace injuries in the children's services sector.*

It includes six **Health and Safety Solutions** that outline ways to control the risks associated with these tasks, and a range of other information about occupational health and safety (OHS).

It is acknowledged that some of the hazardous tasks described in this kit relate to engaging with children (eg working at low levels, lifting children onto equipment or moving play equipment).

Organisations are encouraged to discuss **how** these tasks are undertaken so both the workers' and children's needs are addressed. This may include considering the equipment, the environment or the systems in the workplace. Workers' and children's health and safety are interlinked and reducing the risks to workers can improve the service for children.

The solutions in this kit are not the only ways to control the risks associated with these hazardous tasks. Depending on the circumstances, a workplace may need to implement multiple or different solutions to those in this kit.

*Based on WorkSafe Victoria's injury statistics from 2004 to 2008. These hazardous tasks may not be present in all childcare services working environments

Workplace injuries in the children's services sector

Between 2004 and 2008, nearly 900 workers were seriously injured while working in childcare centres and kindergartens in Victoria. Seventy per cent of these injuries were sprains, strains, fractures and soft tissue injuries, also known as musculoskeletal injuries.**

These injuries are preventable.

**Based on WorkSafe Victoria's injury statistics from 2004 to 2008.

The six most common hazardous tasks in the children's services sector:

1. **Lifting children in/out of cots and highchairs or on/off change tables** – Bending, twisting and reaching to lift children due to the design, placement or characteristics of cots, highchairs or change tables.

2. **Working at low levels** – Awkward postures, tripping or falling due to sitting on children's furniture or the floor.

3. **Moving equipment** – Lifting, moving, carrying, pushing or pulling heavy or awkward indoor and outdoor play equipment.

4. **Storing supplies and equipment** – Tripping, falling or being hit by falling objects due to overcrowded or poorly designed storage areas. Bending, lifting, twisting and using high or unexpected force to move heavy or awkward objects.

5. **Using office areas** – Awkward body postures due to poorly designed, cluttered or inappropriate office areas. Tripping, falling or being hit by falling objects due to poorly designed office areas.

6. **Maintaining indoor and outdoor areas** – Falling from height while standing on chairs and tables to display artwork. Tripping or falling over toys or on poorly maintained, uneven or wet floor surfaces.

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Preventing these injuries

Read the information inside this kit.

Consult with workers, health and safety representatives (HSRs) and managers about OHS and on ways to control the risks associated with these hazardous tasks. You can download more copies of this kit at **worksafe.vic.gov.au/children**.

Refer to:

- the 'further information' section on the back of this kit and in each Health and Safety Solution to learn more about how to control the risks.
- the diagram opposite to select solutions for the workplace that provide the highest level of protection and reliability possible.

Implement solutions to eliminate or reduce the risks associated with these hazardous tasks so far as is practicable, to prevent injuries from occurring.

Regularly review any solutions that are put in place to check they are still working.

Continue to identify hazardous tasks and put solutions in place in consultation with workers and HSRs.

Encourage reporting of injuries or near misses so they can be analysed and solutions put in place to prevent further incidents.

Engage someone suitably qualified in health and safety if help is needed to make improvements.

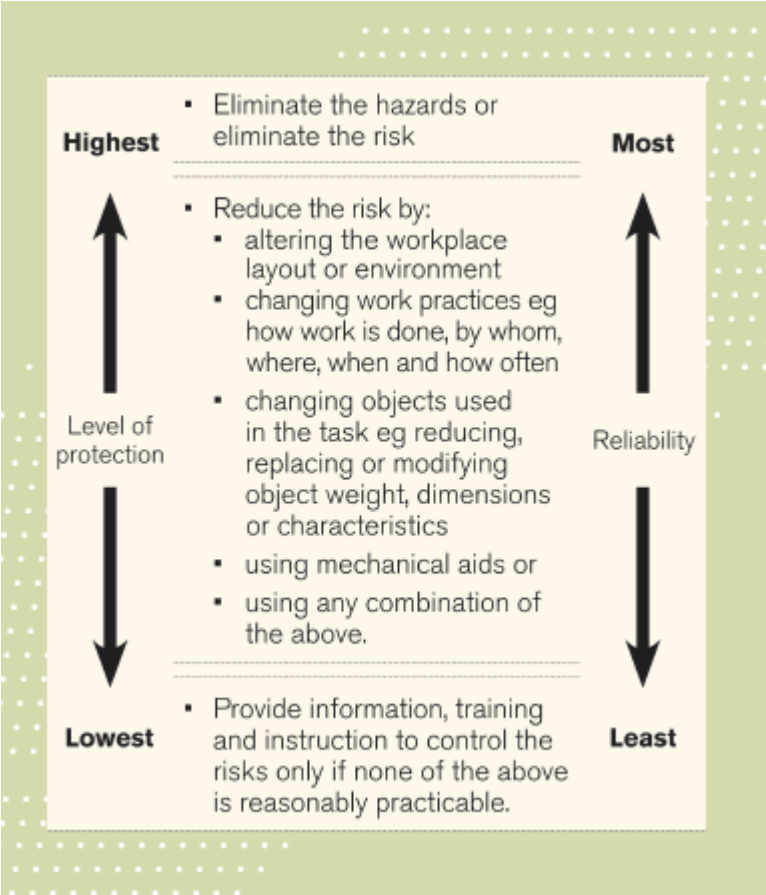
Expand this kit by adding extra resources.

Important note

The information in this kit is general guidance only and focuses on the six most common hazardous tasks in the children's services sector. It should not be viewed as a definitive guide to the law, and should be read in conjunction with the *Occupational Health and Safety Act* 2004. This kit does not cover all your requirements under health and safety laws.

Compliance with OHS laws is a continuous process that involves the development and maintenance of a healthy and safe work environment, and safe systems of work. This ongoing process must be sufficient to fulfil the duty holder's obligations under OHS laws.

WorkSafe inspectors check the risks associated with these hazardous tasks are eliminated or reduced so far as is reasonably practicable.



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Responsibilities*

Employers

Employers can include non-profit organisations, private companies, community organisations, franchises, local governments or other businesses that have management control of the workplace.

Employers have a responsibility under the OHS Act to provide a healthy and safe working environment, so far as is reasonably practicable. This duty extends to any person who may be affected by the organisation's activities (eg other people present at the workplace such as children or volunteers).

Part of this responsibility includes identifying and controlling the risks from the common hazardous tasks in this kit.

Employers cannot remove or pass on their health and safety responsibilities by way of a contractual arrangement with anyone.

Under the OHS Act employers must:

- provide and maintain a workplace, equipment and systems of work that are safe and do not pose health risks
- provide adequate amenities
- provide information, instruction, training or supervision for employees to work safely and without risks to health
- implement arrangements for the safe use, handling, storage and transport of chemicals and hazardous substances
- monitor the health of employees and the conditions of the workplace, and keep records on the health and safety of employees
- employ or engage a suitably qualified person to provide advice on the health and safety of employees
- consult with employees and HSRs on matters that may affect their health, safety or welfare
- provide employees with information in appropriate languages about health and safety arrangements in the workplace, and who employees can contact to ask questions or to make a complaint
- notify WorkSafe immediately upon becoming aware of an incident that results in death or serious injury.

Some workers in children's services are employed by labour hire agencies to work in another organisation. These workers are sometimes called contractors, agency staff or temporary staff. In these situations, both the labour hire agency and the host employer have responsibilities to protect the health and safety of workers.

Where there are multiple employers who manage or control the workplace (eg in a franchiser/franchisee arrangement or a co-located service with shared work areas), all employers have responsibilities to provide a healthy and safe workplace.

Employees

Employees have a responsibility under the OHS Act to take reasonable care for their own health and safety and for the health and safety of others who may be affected by their actions while at work.

*Visit **worksafe.vic.gov.au** for more information about these and other responsibilities.

Before you implement any solutions

Employers must consult with workers and health and safety representatives (if you have them) about OHS matters that directly affect them or are likely to directly affect them.

Select solutions that are most reliable and provide the highest level of protection possible using the diagram above to help you.

To determine what is reasonably practicable visit worksafe.vic.gov.au and search 'reasonably practicable'.

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A Health and Safety Solution

Working at low levels in children's services

What is the problem?

Workers experience musculoskeletal injuries (eg sprains, strains, fractures and soft tissue injuries) from working at low levels in children's services. Working at low levels includes working at floor level, crouching, kneeling or sitting on children's furniture.

It is acknowledged that working at low levels may be necessary for engaging with children. Organisations are encouraged to discuss how tasks at low levels are undertaken so the worker's and children's needs are addressed safely.

What are the risks?

Workers may be at risk of injuries from:

- awkward postures due to sitting on children's furniture or the floor
- awkward postures due to crouching or kneeling at floor level
- tripping or falling due to raising or lowering the body to/from low levels
- no adult-sized seating options being available
- working at low levels for long durations.

What are solutions to the problems?

Equipment

- Provide adult sized chairs that are adjustable for seat height, backrest height and tilt. For example:
  - use adult-sized chairs that can be raised and lowered beyond the usual lowering range to ensure workers can sit in a supported posture while engaging with children at eye level
  - check whether castors or glides should be chosen. This depends on the task the chair is required for and whether the chair is permanently located in an area or wheeled in and out as required. As a general principle:
  - chairs with glides should not be considered mobile or carried in and out of areas for use
  - chairs with castors can be moved easily with brake options to prevent movement
  - any administrative procedure implemented to control risks (eg the implementation of brakes if required) will rely on appropriate instruction, training and supervision.
- Provide children's chairs that are higher and matched to the age/size of children.
- Provide additional seating options for workers (eg adult-sized chairs, reading chairs or couches).
- Include features in outdoor play areas for workers to sit on as an alternative to squatting, crouching or sitting at ground level.

Systems

- Reduce tasks completed at low levels.
- For tasks completed at low levels:
  - provide a surface to cushion the point of contact between the worker's body and the floor
  - limit the duration the task is conducted for
  - rotate the task to limit worker's exposure to risks.
- Provide workers with information, instruction and supervision on documented work procedures and use of equipment and aids.
- Provide reporting processes so safety issues can be identified and fixed as soon as possible.
- Schedule and record regular inspections and maintenance of all areas of the workplace and equipment.

A Health and Safety Solution

The problem

Workers sitting on children's furniture and the floor to work at low levels.

A solution

Adult sized chair that can be adjusted, raised and lowered to enable the worker to sit in a supported posture while working at low levels.

Further Information

WorkSafe Advisory Service
Toll-free 1800 136 089
Email info@worksafe.vic.gov.au
worksafe.vic.gov.au

Related WorkSafe Health and Safety Solutions

- *Lifting children in/out of cots and highchairs or on/off change tables*
- *Moving equipment in children's services*
- *Storing supplies and equipment in children's services*
- *Using office areas in children's services*
- *Maintaining indoor and outdoor areas in children's services*

Related WorkSafe publications

- *Manual Handling Code of Practice, 2000*
- *Officewise, 2006*

Related publications

- *AS/NZS 4438:1997, Height adjustable swivel chairs*
- *Children's Services Regulations, 2009 (available from* ***legislation.vic.gov.au****)*
- *Design guide for Victorian children's services, 2009 (available from* ***education.vic.gov.au****)*

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A Health and Safety Solution

Moving equipment in children's services

What is the problem?

Workers in the children's services sector experience musculoskeletal injuries (eg sprains, strains, fractures and soft tissue injuries) from manually moving or carrying equipment.

Equipment includes large, bulky, awkward or heavy objects such as indoor and outdoor play equipment (eg climbing frames, model kitchens, bookcases or block trolleys). Equipment also includes objects such as evacuation cots and children's furniture.

Equipment is frequently moved in children's services to provide children with a stimulating or changing environment. Organisations are encouraged to discuss how equipment is moved so the needs of workers and children are addressed safely.

What are the risks?

Workers may be at risk of injuries from:

- bending, twisting and exerting high or unexpected force due to manually lifting, moving or carrying heavy or awkward indoor and outdoor equipment
- no aids being available to move equipment (eg trolleys)
- poorly maintained or inappropriate ladders
- an insufficient number of people to undertake the task
- pushing or pulling evacuation cots that are difficult to manoeuvre over uneven surfaces or in small spaces.

What are solutions to the problems?

Equipment

- Replace heavy or awkward equipment with lighter equipment.
- Replace heavy or awkward equipment with equipment with lockable wheels so it can be easily moved.
- Store equipment close to where it is used.
- Use trolleys for moving heavy or awkward objects rather than manually lifting and carrying objects. For example:
  - match the trolley to the weight and dimensions of the objects that are being moved
  - designate appropriate routes for trolleys so they are not pushed over surfaces with a high level of friction or resistance or lifted over structures such as steps.
- Use sandpit covers that are segmented or rolled to reduce manually lifting the entire cover.
- Store objects in smaller rather than larger containers to avoid having to lift and balance heavy loads.
- Use lightweight, sturdy, stackable containers with wheels and handles to store or move objects.

Evacuation cots

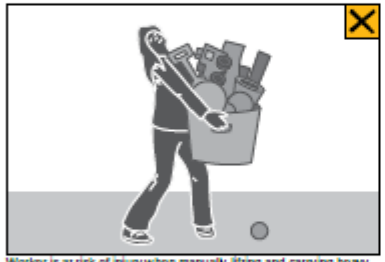
- Measure doorways to ensure they are wide enough for evacuation cots.
- Fit evacuation cots with large diameter wheels (eg 100-150mm) to assist with the negotiation of external surface obstacles. Wheels should be sturdy, lockable and well maintained to move the cot with minimal resistance.
- Assess the floor and ground surfaces of the evacuation route for minimal friction (eg no thick carpet, tanbark or broken concrete), and modify existing surfaces where necessary.
- Remove or modify any structures the evacuation cot needs to be lifted over (eg steps or raised door frames).
- Ensure emergency exits are accessible at all times and are not locked or blocked.

A Health and Safety Solution

Systems

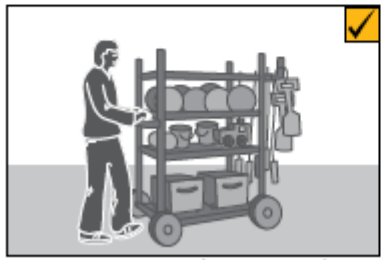
- Consider the weight, size and manoeuvrability when purchasing or replacing equipment.
- Identify and label the weight, size and handling instructions for equipment that is moved (eg whether equipment must be moved with an appropriate aid such as wheels or a trolley or if it can only be moved with two people).
- If facilities are shared with other organisations, designate how equipment should be moved, who will move equipment and when it will be moved.
- Provide workers with information, instruction and supervision on documented work procedures and use of equipment and aids.
- Provide reporting processes so safety issues can be identified and fixed as soon as possible.
- Schedule and record regular inspections and maintenance of all areas of the workplace and equipment.

The problem



Worker is at risk of injury when manually lifting and carrying heavy or awkward objects.

A solution



Trolley used to move playground equipment and toys, reducing the need to manually lift and carry objects. Large wheels help move the trolley over uneven surfaces.

Further Information

WorkSafe Advisory Service
Toll-free 1800 136 089
Email info@worksafe.vic.gov.au
worksafe.vic.gov.au

Related WorkSafe Health and Safety Solutions

- *Lifting children in/out of cots and highchairs or on/off change tables*
- *Working at low levels in children's services*
- *Storing supplies and equipment in children's services*
- *Using office areas in children's services*
- *Maintaining indoor and outdoor areas in children's services*

Related WorkSafe publication

- *Manual Handling Code of Practice, 2000*

Other related publications

- *Children's Services Regulations, 2009 (available from* ***education.vic.gov.au****)*
- *Design guide for Victorian children's services, 2009 (available from* ***education.vic.gov.au****)*
- *Outdoor play guide for Victorian children's services, 2007 (available from* ***education.vic.gov.au****)*

Australian Standards

- *AS/NZS 4422:1996, Playground surfacing – specifications, requirements and test method*
- *AS/NZS 4685.1-200,4 Playground equipment safety*

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A Health and Safety Solution

Storing supplies and equipment in children's services

What is the problem?

Workers in the children's services sector experience musculoskeletal injuries (eg sprains, strains, fractures and soft tissue injuries) from moving supplies and equipment in storage areas.

What are the risks?

Workers may be at risk of injuries from:

- tripping or falling due to overcrowded or poorly designed storage areas
- being hit by falling objects due to unstable or insufficient shelving
- bending, twisting and exerting high or unexpected force due to manually lifting, moving or carrying objects
- bending and reaching due to placement of objects above shoulder height or below knee height
- no ladders or step platforms available to access higher shelves
- poorly maintained or inappropriate ladders.
- no aids available to move supplies or equipment (eg trolleys).

What are solutions to the problems?

Equipment

- Fix shelving to the floor and walls of the storage area.
- Use shelving with a safe working load limit (designated by the manufacturer) and do not exceed this weight limit.
- Maintain shelving and replace any shelving that is cracked, loose or damaged.
- Store objects in smaller containers to avoid having to lift and balance heavy loads.
- Use lightweight, sturdy, stackable containers with wheels and handles to store or move objects.
- Maintain storage area doors so they can be easily opened and closed by workers.
- Design and provide specific storage areas for outdoor or larger equipment.
- If an outdoor storage shed is used, fix the shed securely to the ground.

Task

- Place items frequently used in easy-to-access shelves between shoulder and knee height.
- Store heavier objects between knee and shoulder height rather than at floor level or overhead.
- Match items stored to available shelving size, space and depth. Avoid overcrowding objects or stacking objects on top of each other.
- Separate flammables, paints and chemicals from other stored objects.
- Separate storage of maintenance equipment (eg lawnmowers) from play equipment.
- Use ladders or step platforms to access higher shelves. For example:
  - select the most appropriate ladder for the task (industrial/domestic rating, height, base width)
  - step platforms provide a larger, more stable work surface than ladders
  - place ladders or step platforms squarely on firm, non-slip surfaces
  - maintain three points of contact (eg two feet and at least one hand or two hands and at least one foot) when ascending, descending or standing on ladders
  - inspect ladders or step platforms regularly. Repair or replace ladders where rungs, steps, treads or top plates are missing, worn, damaged or loose
  - stand no higher than the second tread below the top plate of ladders
  - store step platforms or ladders where workers can easily access them when required. Milk crates, chairs, boxes or play equipment should not be used to reach higher objects.

If mezzanine floors are used for storage

- Store items within the safe working load limit of the mezzanine floor.
- Access the mezzanine floor by stairs with handrails, not a ladder.
- Provide handrails and toe boards around the perimeter of mezzanine floors to prevent people or objects from falling.

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(Health and Safety Solution continued overleaf).

A Health and Safety Solution

Systems

- Regularly review supplies and equipment in storage areas, and discard objects that do not need to be retained or have not been used within a designated timeframe (eg 12 months).
- Provide a layout plan of where specific items should be placed in storage areas.
- Identify and label the weight, size and handling instructions for stored objects (eg whether object must be stored in a specific place and whether it should be moved with an appropriate aid such as a trolley).
- Provide workers with information, instruction and supervision on documented work procedures and use of equipment and aids.
- Provide reporting processes so safety issues can be identified and fixed as soon as possible.
- Schedule and record regular inspections and maintenance of all areas of the workplace and all equipment.

The problem

Overcrowded storage area with poorly maintained shelves. Heavy objects are placed above shoulder height. Inadequate access for trolleys or step platforms/ladders

A solution

Shelving that is maintained, secured to the wall and has a safe working load that is not exceeded. Objects are stored in lightweight, sturdy, stackable containers with wheels and handles. Adequate space for trolleys or step platforms/ladders

Further Information

WorkSafe Advisory Service
Toll-free 1800 136 089
Email info@worksafe.vic.gov.au
worksafe.vic.gov.au

Related WorkSafe Health and Safety Solutions

- *Lifting children in/out of cots and highchairs or on/off change tables*
- *Working at low levels in children's services*
- *Moving equipment in children's services*
- *Using office areas in children's services*
- *Maintaining indoor and outdoor areas in children's services*

WorkSafe publications

- *Manual Handling Code of Practice, 2000*
- *Prevention of falls – ladders, 2005*
- *Prevention of falls – mezzanines, 2005*

Other publications

- *AS 1657-1992, Fixed platforms, walkways, stairways and ladders – Design, construction and installation*
- *AS/NZS 1892.5:2000, Portable ladders – Selection, safe use and care*
- *Children's Services Regulations, 2009 (available from **education.vic.gov.au**)*
- *Design guide for Victorian children's services, 2009 (available from **education.vic.gov.au**)*
- *Outdoor play guide for Victorian children's services, 2007 (available from **education.vic.gov.au**)*

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A Health and Safety Solution

Using office areas

May 2011

What is the problem?

Using office areas that are unsuitable (eg poorly designed or cluttered) for computer or administrative tasks.

What are the risks?

Workers may be at risk of musculoskeletal injuries (eg sprains, strains, fractures and soft tissue injuries) to the back, neck or shoulders when using awkward postures, or exerting high or unexpected force in office areas.

Common sources of risk include:

- poorly designed or cluttered office areas
- prolonged and intense keyboard and mouse use and high demands on vision
- placement of objects above shoulder height or below knee height
- manually lifting or moving heavy objects
- inappropriate seating
- supporting the telephone on the shoulder when using a computer or writing
- sustained mental effort and peak demands or set work rates
- insufficient time to complete work.

Workers may also be at risk of injuries from slips and trips or from being struck by objects due to:

- cluttered or poorly maintained office areas
- poorly maintained floor surfaces
- unsecured filing cabinets or unstable shelving.

What are solutions to the problems?

Systems

Develop systems of work that:

- match the numbers of workers to the task and environment
- alternate repetitive tasks with tasks requiring different postures and movements
- regularly review supplies and equipment and discard objects that don't need to be retained or have not been used within a designated timeframe (eg 12 months)
- provide workers with information, instruction, training and supervision in relation to work procedures and use of equipment
- identify and report safety issues so they can be fixed as soon as possible
- schedule and record regular inspections and maintenance of all areas of the workplace and equipment
- allocate sufficient time to complete work tasks.

Computers, desks and chairs

- Provide a height-adjustable desk so workers can sit comfortably at the desk with their feet flat on the floor. If the desk is not height adjustable, provide a footstool.
- Provide chairs that can be easily adjusted and have a five-star base.
- Provide information to workers on chair adjustments/ergonomics. For example:
  - adjust the height of the chair so the forearms are parallel to the desk when elbows are at 90 degrees or more
  - adjust the backrest of the chair so it supports the lower back
  - remove armrests if they restrict the ability to move closer to the desk or cause the shoulders to be raised when typing.
- Position the top of the computer screen at eye level, at arms length and away from sources of glare such as windows or lights.
- If laptops are used for long periods, reduce awkward postures by using a laptop stand, separate computer monitor and/or a separate keyboard and mouse.
- Provide adequate space for workstations.
- Keep the space under the desk free from objects or clutter.
- Secure cables under computer desks to minimise tripping hazards.
- Position computer keyboard and mouse to avoid overstretching.
- Use document holders to avoid working from documents that are flat on the desk.
- Place frequently used items within easy reach.
- Use a telephone headset to avoid awkward postures.
- Take regular breaks away from the desk to stand, relax eyes, and stretch or perform other tasks.

(Continued over page)

Filing cabinets and shelving

- Secure filing cabinets to the wall or use filing cabinets with anti-tilt features.
- Fix shelving to the floor and walls of the office area.
- Use shelving with a safe working load limit (designated by the manufacturer) and do not exceed this weight limit.
- Maintain shelving and replace any shelving that is cracked, loose or damaged.
- Place items frequently used in easy-to-access shelves, between shoulder and knee height.
- Store heavier objects between knee and shoulder height rather than at floor level or overhead.
- Store objects in smaller containers to avoid having to lift and balance heavy loads.

Environment

- Maintain floor areas to remove uneven or damaged surfaces that may cause people to trip.
- Install additional power points to avoid stretching electrical cords across floors.

The problem

The office is cluttered and has inadequate space under the desk for the worker's legs.

A solution

The desk, chair and computer equipment are adjustable for the worker. Storage systems are used to reduce clutter. A window blind reduces glare.

Further information

WorkSafe Advisory Service
Toll-free 1800 136 089

info@worksafevic.gov.au
worksafe.vic.gov.au

Related WorkSafe publications

Officewise, 2006
Manual Handling Code of Practice, 2000
Working safely in community services, 2006
Injury hotspot – Community support services, 2008
WorkSafe OHS compliance kits – Children's services, disability service, home care, community support services
Volunteer health and safety – A handbook for community service organisations, 2008

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A Health and Safety Solution

Maintaining indoor and outdoor areas in children's services

What is the problem?

Workers in the children's services sector experience musculoskeletal injuries (eg sprains, strains, fractures and soft tissue injuries) when maintaining indoor and outdoor areas.

What are the risks?

Workers may be at risk of injuries from:

- falling from height when displaying artwork in indoor areas without appropriate aids (eg ladders)
- tripping and falling due to toys that haven't been packed away
- tripping or falling due to poorly maintained or uneven floor surfaces
- tripping or falling due to wet floor surfaces
- awkward postures due to working at floor level to tidy up
- repetitive movements required to clean surfaces.

What are solutions to the problems?

Equipment

- Use a pulley system so stringlines for displaying artwork can be raised and lowered from ground level.
- Use ladders or step platforms to reach higher objects. For example:
  - select the most appropriate ladder for the task (eg industrial/domestic rating, height, base width)
  - step platforms provide a larger, more stable work surface than ladders
  - place ladders or step platforms squarely on firm, non-slip surfaces
  - maintain three points of contact (eg two feet and at least one hand or two hands, and at least one foot) when ascending, descending or standing on a ladder
  - inspect step ladders or step platforms regularly. Repair or replace ladders where rungs, steps, treads or top plates are missing, worn, damaged or loose
  - tables, chairs, play equipment or milk crates should not be used to reach higher objects
  - stand no higher than the second tread below the top plate of step ladders
  - store step platforms or ladders where workers can easily access them when required.
- Provide storage containers that are appropriately sized and shaped, sturdy, lightweight and have wheels/handles so toys can be packed away easily.

Environment

- Maintain floor and ground surfaces. Replace uneven or damaged surfaces that cause people to trip (eg damaged carpets, mats, tiles, linoleum, concrete or impact-absorbing surfaces).
- Regularly maintain outdoor areas to contain materials such as tanbark or sand within designated areas.
- Install additional power points to avoid stretching electrical cords across floors.
- Use a surface colour or texture change to highlight where surfaces suddenly change from hard to soft or where a change in level is difficult to see.
- Immediately clean up spills, regardless of how small the spill is or whether it occurs in a staff-only or child-accessible area.

Systems

- Encourage children to assist in picking up toys.
- Tidy areas frequently so toys do not accumulate on the floor.
- Schedule and record regular inspections and maintenance of all areas of the workplace and all equipment.
- Regularly review equipment. Discard equipment and objects that do not need to be retained or have not been used within a designated timeframe (eg 12 months).
- Provide workers with information, instruction and supervision on documented work procedures and use of equipment and aids.
- Provide reporting processes so safety issues can be identified and fixed as soon as possible.

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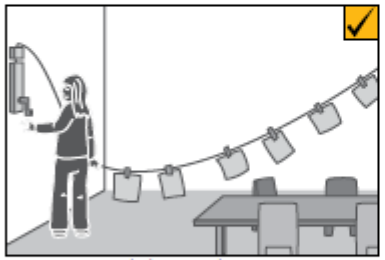
(Health and Safety Solution continued overleaf).

A Health and Safety Solution

The problem

Worker is at risk of falling from height when an appropriate aid is not used to reach higher objects.

A solution



A pulley system and stringline can be raised and lowered to display artwork.

Further Information

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Related WorkSafe Health and Safety Solutions

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- *Working at low levels in children's services*
- *Moving equipment in children's services*
- *Storing supplies and equipment in children's services*
- *Using office areas in children's services*

Related WorkSafe publications

- *Manual Handling Code of Practice, 2000*
- *Injury hotspots – Children's Services, 2008*
- *Injury hotspots – Slips trips and falls, 2009*
- *Health and Safety Solution – Vacuuming, 2009*
- *Health and Safety Solution – Mopping, 2009*
- *Prevention of falls – ladders, 2006*

Other related publications

- *Children's Services Regulations, 2009 (available from* ***legislation.vic.gov.au****)*
- *Design guide for Victorian children's services, 2009 (available from* ***education.vic.gov.au****)*
- *Outdoor play guide for Victorian children's services, 2007 (available from* ***education.vic.gov.au****)*

Australian Standards

- *AS/NZS 4422:1996, Playground surfacing – specifications, requirements and test method*

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Further information

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Further resources

WorkSafe Health and Safety Solutions

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- *Moving equipment in children's services*
- *Storing supplies and equipment in children's services*
- *Using office areas in children's services*
- *Maintaining indoor and outdoor areas in children's services*

WorkSafe publications

- *Manual Handling Code of Practice, 2000*
- *Guide to the Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004, 2005*
- *How WorkSafe applies the law in relation to Reasonably Practicable, 2007*
- *Getting help to improve health and safety, 2008*
- *Labour hire agencies: Managing the safety of on-hired workers, 2006*
- *Host employers: Managing the safety of labour hire workers, 2006*
- *Employee representation, 2006*
- *Information for health and safety representatives, 2006*
- *Information for employees on health and safety, 2006*
- *Childcare – Designing change table steps for children, 2009*
- *Injury hotspot: Children's services, 2008*

Other publications

- *Children's Services Regulations, 2009 (available from legislation.vic.gov.au)*
- *Design guide for Victorian children's services, 2009 (available from education.vic.gov.au)*
- *Outdoor play guide for Victorian children's services, 2007 (available from education.vic.gov.au)*

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WorkSafe acknowledges and thanks the children's services industry representatives who have contributed to the development of this kit.

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