

# 4 | Health and safety practice in early years settings

**Learning aim A1:**  
Understand the importance of complying with relevant health and safety legislation and regulations

- ▶ Legal requirements for early years settings
- ▶ Health and safety practice in early years settings

**Learning aim A2:**  
Understand how to prevent the spread of infection

- ▶ How infection spreads
- ▶ Infection control in an early years setting

**Learning aim B:**  
Understand how to prevent accidents and incidents and carry out risk assessments

- ▶ Common hazards and how to prevent accidents, incidents and injuries
- ▶ Supervision and resources to prevent accidents
- ▶ Carrying out risk assessments

**Learning aim C:**  
Understand how to respond to emergencies

- ▶ Procedures for responding to accidents
- ▶ Procedures for responding to other emergencies

## Introduction to this unit

Parents want their children to be safe and well when they leave them in someone else's care. They also need reassurance that early years practitioners know exactly what to do in the event of an emergency. In this unit, you will learn about preventing the spread of infection and how to deal with emergencies in an early years setting. You will also learn how to create safe environments, both indoors and outdoors, while still allowing children to explore and take risks. The knowledge from this unit provides an introduction to a paediatric first aid course, which is required for work in most settings.

## Legal requirements for practitioners

Understanding and complying with health and safety legislation is one of the most important aspects of working with young children. Parents and carers need to know that their children will be safe in your care and you are legally obliged to follow the guidance set out in health and safety regulations. Young children are very vulnerable and depend on you to keep them safe from harm. It is therefore very important to have a sound working knowledge of the legal requirements for health and safety.

## Health and safety legislation

The law relating to health and safety varies in the four home countries of the UK and it is important that you are familiar with the relevant legislation for the country in which you work. The health and safety legislation for all four countries includes guidance for practitioners relating to:

- promoting the good health of children by preventing accidents and dealing with emergencies
- preventing the spread of infection by maintaining strict hygiene practices and infection control procedures
- carrying out risk assessments and maintaining a safe, secure environment, both indoors and outdoors
- keeping up to date with legislation relating to health and safety and undertaking regular training.

Some of the main legislation and regulations relating to health and safety are summarised in Figure 4.1.

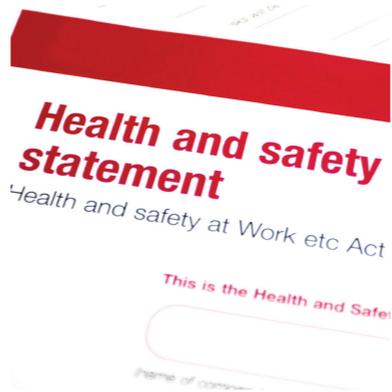
Your assessment criteria:

**Learning aim A 1: Understand the importance of complying with relevant health and safety legislation and regulations**

**P1** Describe how legal requirements affect practice in early years settings using examples relevant to the home country:

- to promote the good health of children
- to prevent the spread of infection
- for risk assessment
- for organisation of the environment.

**M1** Discuss reasons why early years settings must comply with legal requirements for health and safety.



**It is important for practitioners to have a sound working knowledge of health and safety legislation**

### Key terms

**Health and Safety Executive (HSE):** national independent watchdog for work-related health and safety issues

**Health Protection Agency (HPA):** the organisation responsible for protecting public health

Figure 4.1 Health and safety legislation relevant to early years settings

Legislation	Impact on early years practice
The Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 (Great Britain) The Health and Safety at Work (Northern Ireland) Order 1978	Outlines the responsibility of individual employees for maintaining health and safety in the workplace.
Childcare Act 2006	Focuses on improving outcomes for children in the early years through the 'five outcomes' of Every Child Matters (including 'being healthy' and 'staying safe').  Introduced the Early Years Foundation Stage in 2008 (including the welfare requirements for promoting health and safeguarding children).
Manual Handling Operations Regulations 1992	Provides guidance for lifting and carrying children, including correct techniques and procedures for risk assessment.
Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002 (COSHH)	Protects children from dangerous chemicals (including cleaning substances and medicines), including regulations about storage and usage.
Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 1995 (RIDDOR)	Outlines the procedures for reporting accidents, injuries and infectious diseases such as TB and meningitis to the <b>Health and Safety Executive (HSE)</b> and the <b>Health Protection Agency (HPA)</b> .
The Food Hygiene (England) Regulations 2006 (similar legislation in Scotland, Wales and Northern England)	Provides guidance on the preparation, storage and cooking of food and the requirements for staff training in food hygiene.
Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage 2012 (England)	The safeguarding and welfare requirements outline the legal responsibilities for providers in promoting children's health, safety and wellbeing (ages 0–5 years).

## Organisation of the environment

The statutory safeguarding and welfare guidance in the Early Years Foundation Stage (2012) include the legal requirements for organising the setting in order to meet the health and safety needs of children from birth to five years old. In registered settings, the indoor premises must be large enough for the number of children in the setting. The provider must also ensure that, so far as is reasonable:

- the facilities, equipment and access to the premises are suitable for children with disabilities
- there are suitable hygienic facilities for changing any children who are in nappies
- there is an adequate number of toilets and hand basins available.

## Research

Investigate the safeguarding and welfare requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage 2012. Reflect on how it affects your practice in placement and make a list of some of the reasons why it is important to comply with the legal requirements in the following areas:

- promoting children's good health
- preventing the spread of infection
- organisation of the environment in your setting.

## Complying with legislation

As an early years practitioner, it is your responsibility to understand how health and safety legislation applies to your own practice in the workplace setting. Complying with health and safety legislation is extremely important in order to:

- protect children, staff and other from accidents, injuries and illness
- promote children's health and wellbeing
- provide reassurance for parents and carers and inspire their confidence in the setting
- maintain a safe working environment for children, staff and visitors
- meet the requirements for registration with Ofsted (the Office for Standards in Education) in England or other **regulatory** organisations: Estyn in Wales, Education and Training Inspectorate in Northern Ireland and Education Scotland.

### Professional practice

You will need to undertake regular training in areas such as first aid and food hygiene and will also be responsible for keeping up to date with changes in legislation and regulations. Some aspects of professional practice in health and safety are summarised in Figure 4.2.

Your assessment criteria:

**Learning aim A 1: Understand the importance of complying with relevant health and safety legislation and regulations**

- P1** Describe how legal requirements affect practice in early years settings using examples relevant to the home country:
  - to promote the good health of children
  - to prevent the spread of infection
  - for risk assessment
  - for organisation of the environment.
- M1** Discuss reasons why early years settings must comply with legal requirements for health and safety.
- D1** Assess the ways in which legislation and procedures in early years settings contribute to children's health and wellbeing.

Figure 4.2 Professional practice in health and safety

Professional practice	Example
Take care of your own health and safety.	Avoid lifting heavy objects on your own or without the appropriate training.
Follow health and safety policies and procedures in the setting.	Know the emergency procedures for fire and evacuation of the setting. Keep fire exits clear. Make sure that medicines and other harmful substances are stored safely.
Follow strict hygiene guidelines.	Maintain strict hygiene practices when preparing food or drinks for children and when carrying out toileting or nappy changing procedures. Maintain the cleanliness of the environment, toys and play materials.
Conduct risk assessments.	Check the safety of the environment, equipment and play resources. Assess risks for planned activities and outings.
Encourage children to follow health and safety procedures and hygiene policies.	Carry out regular hand washing routines. Supervise the safe use of toys and play equipment.

Professional practice	Example
Wear protective clothing when necessary.	Use aprons and disposable gloves when changing nappies.
Report accidents, incidents, injuries and illness.	Complete accident reports. Notify the relevant authorities. Communicate with parents and carers when necessary.

## Health and safety information

There are many organisations that provide information and guidance on all aspects of health and safety. These include:

- **Health Protection Agency (HPA):** an organisation responsible for protecting public health through the provision of support and advice to the National Health Service, local authorities, emergency services and the Department of Health
- **Health and Safety Executive (HSE):** a national independent watchdog for work-related health and safety issues, responsible for acting in the public interest to reduce work-related death and serious injury
- **Food Standards Agency (FSA):** an independent government department responsible for food safety and food hygiene across the UK
- **British Safety Council:** a UK charity that works with businesses to improve their health, safety and environmental management
- **Child Accident Prevention Trust (CAPT):** a UK charity working to reduce the number of children killed, disabled or seriously injured in accidents.

### Case study

Cheryl has just been promoted to the position of deputy manager at Little Rascals Day Nursery, a registered setting that provides places for children aged six months to five years. The manager has asked Cheryl to review and update the health and safety policies at the nursery.

1. Describe the health and safety policies you would expect to be in place at Little Rascals Day Nursery.
2. Explain why it is important for early years settings to review and update their health and safety policies on a regular basis.
3. List some of the health and safety organisations that Cheryl might consult, and give examples of the information she might obtain from each one.



**Always follow hygiene guidelines when changing nappies**

### Key term

**Regulatory:** having authority and responsibility to enforce regulations

### Research

Investigate the procedures in your placement or workplace setting for:

- reporting accidents and notifying childhood illnesses
- food hygiene procedures when preparing snacks for children
- storage of medicines and cleaning substances.

Using additional information from the Health and Safety Executive ([www.hse.gov.uk](http://www.hse.gov.uk)), create a health and safety report that explains the ways in which these procedures contribute to children's health and wellbeing.

### Design

Investigate one of the organisations listed in this section. Design an information leaflet or web page for new employees, providing guidance on the work of the organisation you have chosen.

# How infection spreads

## The spread of infection

Most infections are caused by harmful **organisms** such as **bacteria** or **viruses** (these are both often referred to as 'germs'). These organisms can easily spread from person to person through the process of **cross-infection** and this can happen in a variety of different ways. Figure 4.3 outlines the different ways in which infection spreads and how to prevent this from happening.

Your assessment criteria:

**Learning aim A 2: Understand how to prevent the spread of infection**

**P2** Explain why it is important to control the spread of infection in an early years setting.

**M2** Analyse how procedures in early years settings prevent the spread of infection.

Figure 4.3 Ways in which infection spreads and how to prevent this

Method of spread	Example	Prevention
Airborne or droplet (breathing in)	Infection is spread through the air by coughing or sneezing (e.g. the common cold).	Cover the mouth when coughing or sneezing. Use tissues and dispose of them appropriately. Have good ventilation in the setting.
Direct contact (skin to skin)	Infection is spread by touching (e.g. cuddling or shaking hands).	Frequent, thorough hand washing procedures, particularly after using the toilet, before handling food and after touching animals
Ingestion (swallowing)	Infection can be spread by eating contaminated food (food poisoning), by touching food with dirty hands (e.g. not washing hands after using the toilet) or by putting dirty hands in the mouth (e.g. after playing outside).	Strict food hygiene procedures Thorough hand washing, particularly after using the toilet and outdoor play Regular cleaning and disinfection of equipment, toys and play materials
Body fluids (blood, urine, vomit)	Some infections can spread from one person to another by direct exchange of body fluids (e.g. <b>hepatitis</b> , <b>HIV</b> and <b>AIDS</b> ).	Always use the <b>Standard Infection Control Precautions</b> when dealing with blood and other body fluids. Wear disposable aprons and gloves. Dispose of nappies, blood-soaked dressings and other used first aid materials appropriately. cover your own cuts with waterproof, adhesive dressings.
Vectors (animals)	Some infections can be spread by insects and animals (e.g. flies or ticks).	Keep food covered. Try to keep flies out of the setting. Encourage children to wash hands frequently, particularly after handling animals or playing outdoors.

## Preventing the spread of infection

Young children are vulnerable to infection, as their **immune systems** are still developing. Policies and procedures to prevent the spread of infection are extremely important for protecting children from illness and promoting good health. In settings where there are groups of children together, infection can easily spread from one child to another. Early years practitioners have a responsibility to follow strict procedures in order to prevent infection from spreading.

One of the main ways to prevent the spread of infection in early years settings is through the practice of frequent hand washing, by children, staff, other adults and visitors to the setting.

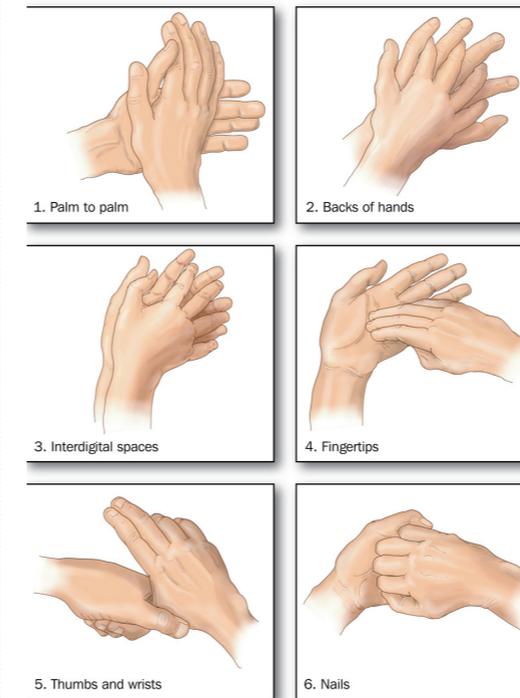


Figure 4.4 The Health Protection Agency (HPA) recommended hand washing procedure; practise using this method until it becomes your routine way of washing your hands.

## Health and safety equipment and resources

Another important way to prevent the spread of infection in an early years setting is by using appropriate equipment and resources. For example, you should use disposable gloves and aprons, appropriate waste bins for hazardous waste (including dirty nappies), disposable tissues and paper towels or hand dryers. The spread of infection can be minimised if all staff follow guidelines, use equipment correctly and encourage children to do the same.

### Research

Investigate the methods of spread for the following infectious diseases: influenza, salmonella, measles.

### Key terms

**AIDS:** auto-Immune deficiency syndrome: a serious (often fatal) disease of the immune system

**Bacteria:** single-celled organisms, some of which are harmful to the human body

**Cross-infection:** when infection is spread from one person to another

**Hepatitis:** a disease characterised by inflammation of the liver and caused by a virus or toxin

**HIV:** human Immunodeficiency virus, which is responsible for causing AIDS

**Immune system:** the body's system of defence against disease or foreign substances

**Organisms:** living beings that have the ability to act or function independently

**Standard Infection Control Precautions:** practical measures that help minimise the risk of infection from blood and body fluids

**Viruses:** tiny, contagious organisms that often cause disease

### Research

Download the document 'Infection Prevention and Control in Childcare Settings' from the NHS (Scotland) at: <http://www.documents.hps.scot.nhs.uk/hai/infection-control/guidelines/infection-prevention-control-childcare.pdf>. Analyse how the procedures in your placement or work setting help to prevent the spread of these infections, and write a letter to parents that explains your safe working practices.

## Professional practice in controlling the spread of infection

There are many ways for practitioners to control the spread of infection in early years settings. Some of the ways in which you can do this are summarised in Figure 4.5.

Figure 4.5 Measures used to control the spread of infection

Measure	Examples of good practice
Policies and procedures	Make sure you are familiar with the policies relating to infection control, e.g. food hygiene and dealing with illness.
Personal hygiene	Wash your hands frequently. Keep your fingernails short and tie back long hair. Cover your mouth when coughing or sneezing. Cover any cuts with waterproof, adhesive dressings.
Changing nappies and toileting routines	Wear aprons and disposable gloves. Wash your hands before and afterwards. Dispose of used nappies in an approved waste unit.
Hand washing	Always wash your hands thoroughly, following the procedure recommended by the Health Protection Agency (see Figure 4.4 on page 111.)
Handling food	Follow strict hygiene procedures when preparing, storing or cooking food, as outlined by the Food Standards Agency.
Disposal of waste	Follow guidance for waste disposal, including nappies, chemicals and other hazardous waste, glass and other sharp materials, as outlined by the Department of Health.
Dealing with body fluids	Follow the Department of Health Standard Infection Control Precautions for dealing with blood and all other body fluids (including urine and vomit). Wear disposable gloves, wash hands thoroughly and dispose of waste materials (including used first aid dressings) in approved clinical waste units.
Cleaning procedures	Always clean up spillages immediately. Use an approved disinfection solution to clean surfaces, equipment and play materials. Machine wash soft toys and dressing up clothes regularly. Keep the outdoor environment clear of animal faeces, broken glass and other debris.

Your assessment criteria:

**Learning aim A2: Understand how to prevent the spread of infection**

**P2** Explain why it is important to control the spread of infection in an early years setting.

**M2** Analyse how procedures in early years settings prevent the spread of infection.



**Make sure you clean and disinfect surfaces, equipment and play materials on a regular basis**

### Design

Design a poster that could be displayed in your staff room, providing guidelines for staff in preventing the spread of infection.

### Research

Investigate how different kinds of waste are disposed of in your placement or work setting (e.g. dirty nappies, first aid materials and broken glass). Make sure you know how to do this correctly.

### Research

Go to the Health Protection Agency Website at [www.hpa.org.uk](http://www.hpa.org.uk) and investigate the methods of spread, incubation and infectious periods for the following diseases: chicken pox, meningitis, salmonella.

## Record keeping and reporting procedures

Accurate record keeping can help practitioners take appropriate precautions to control the spread of infection. Records must be easily accessible, although confidential information about children must be held securely (according to the requirements of the [Data Protection Act 1998](#)).

Information held about each child in the setting should include:

- full name, date of birth, address and emergency contact details for parents or carers
- immunisation records and medical history (including details of medical conditions such as diabetes or asthma)
- any allergies (e.g. specific foods, bee stings or other allergies that could result in a medical emergency).

Parents or carers of infected children should always be notified immediately. The parents of the other children in the setting should be informed by phone, letter, email or other communication methods.

It is important for parents to understand that they should not bring ill children into the setting. The setting should advise parents to contact their GP or other health professional if they are concerned about their child's health. Most infectious diseases have a specific **incubation period** and children should be isolated throughout the **infectious period** of the illness.

## Notifying relevant authorities

Most cases of infectious diseases in early years settings must be reported to Ofsted (or the equivalent regulatory organisation – see page 108). The outbreak of some infectious diseases (such as meningitis) must be reported to the Health Protection Agency (HPA). In some cases, this may lead to the closure of the setting for a period of time. It is very important to report and record all information accurately and to provide clear information and reassurance for parents. (See also Unit 3, pages 98–99.)

### Research

Investigate the procedures in your placement or work setting for notifying parents about infectious diseases in the setting.

Design a fact sheet that could be used to inform new parents about the procedures in your placement.

### Research

Investigate where children's records are kept in your placement or work setting.

How is confidential information kept securely?

Compare the procedures in your placement with those of others in your group and make a note of the similarities and differences.

### Key terms

**Data Protection Act (1998):** the UK law that protects the privacy of individuals, and ensures that information about them is kept securely and is processed fairly

**Incubation period:** the time between exposure to a disease and the appearance of symptoms

**Infectious period:** the time during which an infected person can transmit the infection to another



**The incidence of some infectious diseases must be reported to the Health Protection Agency**

## Recognising and reporting hazards

**Hazards** can be present in many different forms in an early years setting and Figure 4.6 gives some examples.

All of these hazards can pose a **risk** to the children, staff and other adults in the setting, so it is important to make regular checks in both the indoor and outdoor environments. Most settings, including home-based care with childminders, will have an established system for recognising and reporting hazards in order to minimise the risk and initiate an action plan for improvement. This will vary depending on the type of setting, the age and stage of development of the children and the layout of the environment – Figure 4.7 gives examples of the daily checks that typically need to be carried out.

Figure 4.7 Daily checks in an early years setting

Indoor environment: daily checks	Comments/Action
Fire escapes are clear	
Electrical sockets are covered	
All chemicals are out of reach (e.g. medicines and cleaning materials)	
All toys and equipment are clean and in good working order	
Specialised safety equipment is in place (e.g. safety stair gates or fireguards in a home setting)	
Radiator heat is controlled and radiator guards are in place (if necessary)	
Ventilation is available	
Refrigerator temperature is within the approved range	
Toilets are clean	
Windows and doors are secure	
<b>Outdoor environment: daily checks</b>	
Play equipment, outdoor toys or games are in good repair	
Outdoor play surfaces, exterior fencing and exterior gates are in good repair and secure	
No dog faeces, broken glass or other potentially dangerous debris in the outdoor play area.	
No poisonous plants in the garden or outdoor area	
No damage to exterior security or access systems	
<b>Staff initials</b>	

Your assessment criteria:

**Learning aim B: Understand how to prevent accidents and incidents and carry out risk assessments**

- P4** Explain common hazards and how adults could prevent accidents to babies and children in an early years setting to include:
- selecting appropriate resources
  - adequate supervision of children.
- M3** Analyse the role of adults in early years settings in preventing accidents to babies and children, with examples.

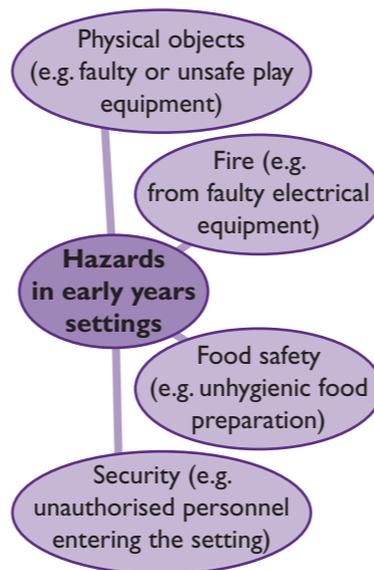


Figure 4.6 Hazards in early years settings

### Key terms

**Hazard:** any object or situation that has the potential to cause injury or ill health

**Risk:** the chance that somebody could be harmed by a hazard

## The role of the adult in preventing accidents

Parents need to know that their children will be safe in your care, so you have an important responsibility to prevent accidents to babies and children in the setting. Some of the ways you can do this are:

- providing adequate supervision of children at all times
- role modelling safe practice and behaviour
- checking for hazards, both indoors and outdoors
- following reporting and recording procedures
- conducting regular risk assessments
- understanding children's development, capabilities and individual needs
- carrying out routine observations of children
- communicating with parents and carers
- selecting appropriate resources for children's age and stage of development
- using appropriate safety equipment when necessary.

## Common injuries to children

Accidents can result in a wide range of injuries to children of different ages, for example:

- burns and scalds from boiling water, hot drinks or unguarded fires
- cuts from knives, broken glass or other sharp implements
- poisoning from medicines, cleaning substances or plants in the outdoor area
- falls from play equipment, which can result in broken bones, sprains or head injuries.

You have a responsibility to prevent injuries to children by being vigilant, following safety procedures and ensuring that equipment is in a good state of repair.

### Case study

Anya is a childminder who provides care in her own home for three children, aged 14 months, two years and four years. Her home has a large garden, with a sand pit and a swing, and an indoor playroom where she keeps a variety of toys.

1. Describe some of the daily checks that Anya should make in order to prevent accidents occurring to the children in her care
2. Analyse Anya's responsibilities as a childminder to ensure the safety of the children in her care, using examples.



Make sure you use specialised safety equipment when necessary

### Research

Research the Health and Safety Executive website at [www.hse.gov.uk](http://www.hse.gov.uk) and examine the information about risk management.

Investigate the procedures in your placement or work setting for recognising and reporting hazards. Make a list of the daily checks that are made to ensure children's safety in the setting, both indoors and outdoors.

Reflect on the importance of early years staff carrying out these daily checks and write a report for parents which explains how these checks help to prevent accidents to babies and children in the setting.

## Selecting appropriate resources

Children are curious and love to investigate. This can lead to all kinds of situations that could result in accidents occurring. As an early years practitioner, you need to have a thorough understanding of child development and children's capabilities. You need to be able to select equipment, toys and play materials that are suitable for children's age and stage of development. Some examples are shown in Figure 4.8.

## Safety equipment

A wide range of safety equipment and other resources are available to help practitioners to keep children safe indoors, outdoors and on outings away from the setting. The choice of safety equipment used will depend on a variety of factors, including the age and stage of development of the children, the type of setting and the nature of the potential risks involved. For example, safety gates, socket covers and fireguards make the home environment safer for toddlers, while playground surfaces, secure fencing and CCTV cameras help to maintain a safer environment for children in group care.

All equipment used with babies and children, such as toys and play materials, electrical items and outdoor equipment, needs to meet the relevant health and safety standards.

These items should display a product-safety logo, such as the **CE mark**, to show that they meet European health and safety standards.

Your assessment criteria:

**Learning aim B: Understand how to prevent accidents and incidents and carry out risk assessments**

**P4** Explain common hazards and how adults could prevent accidents to babies and children in an early years setting to include:

- selecting appropriate resources
- adequate supervision of children.

**M3** Analyse the role of adults in early years settings in preventing accidents to babies and children, with examples.



School-age children need challenging activities within safe limits

Figure 4.8 Selecting appropriate resources for children

Age range	Development and capabilities	Examples of resources
Babies (0–1 year)	Very dependent on adults Can easily choke on small objects	Choose toys and play materials with no loose or small parts.
Toddlers (1–2 years)	Love to climb and explore Much more mobile but have little sense of danger	Use stair gates, fireguards, and window and cupboard locks.
Pre-school children (2–4 years)	Enjoy being independent More coordinated but lack self-control	Choose resources that encourage independence safely, e.g. safety scissors and knives.
School aged children (4–7 years)	Enjoy investigating and testing their abilities More mature but still require supervision	Provide challenging activities within safe limits, e.g. stabiliser wheels on bicycles and safety helmets.

## Supervision of children

Children should be supervised in the setting at all times. They must never leave the setting unsupervised and should only be released into the care of individuals who have been notified to the provider by the parents. In addition, the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage also prescribes the number of staff that must be available to supervise children in the setting at all times. The mandatory (compulsory by law) staff to child ratios are outlined in Figure 4.9.



The CE mark indicates that toys and other items meet European safety standards

Figure 4.9 Minimum staff to child ratios in early years settings

Age of children	Staff/child ratio for group care	Comments
0–2 years	1 member of staff for every 3 children	At least half of all the staff must have received training that specifically addresses the care of babies.
2 years	1 member of staff for every 4 children	
3 years and over (in registered settings operating from 8am to 4pm)	1 member of staff for every 13 children	Where a person with Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) or Early Years Professional (EYP) status is working directly with the children
3 years and over (in registered settings operating from 8am to 4pm <b>and additional extended hours</b> )	1 member of staff for every 8 children	Where a person with Qualified QTS or EYP is not working directly with the children
5 years and over (within the relevant school year)	1 member of staff for every 30 children	Infant class size is regulated by the Education Act 2002.
<b>Childminders</b>		
At any one time, childminders may care for a maximum of six children under the age of eight. Of these six children, a maximum of three may be young children, and there should only be one child under the age of one.		



Extra attention should be paid to staff to child ratios when taking children on visits or outings away from the setting

**Key term**  
**CE mark:** a symbol that shows that a product complies with European health, safety and environmental legislation

**Research**  
 Investigate the safety advice for babies and young children by the Child Accident Prevention Trust at <http://capt.org.uk>.  
 Carry out a check and make a list of the equipment and resources that might help to prevent accidents in your placement or work setting.

## The process of conducting risk assessments

Most things in life carry some element of risk. Young children need to learn how to take risks safely and this requires a realistic approach and a certain amount of common sense. If children are constantly 'wrapped up in cotton wool', they are denied the opportunity to practise risk taking.

A health and safety risk assessment is the process of identifying risk and considering measures to reduce the risk to a safe level. The formal risk assessment process generally involves the steps shown in Figure 4.10.

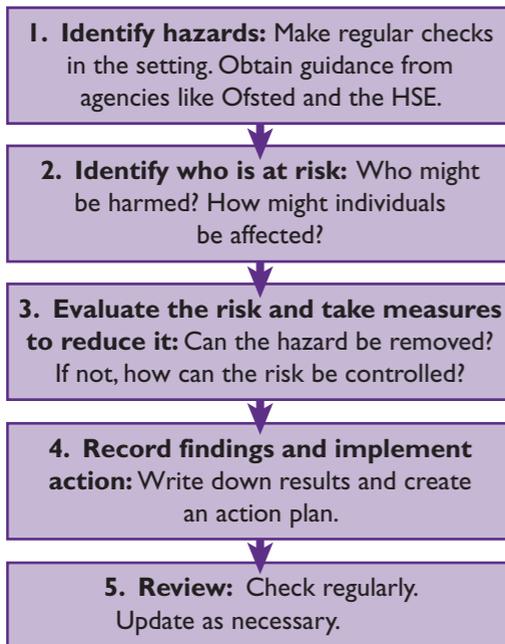


Figure 4.10 The risk assessment process

For another example of a risk assessment, see Unit 3, page 88.

## Recording risk assessments

The practitioners in early years settings should carry out risk assessments on a regular basis. These should include checks on the premises, equipment and planned activities, as well as outings away from the setting. Each risk assessment should assess the potential hazards, identify who is at risk and the level of risk involved, the action to be taken and a date for review. This should be recorded on a risk assessment form. The form used will vary according to the type of setting, but will always include some main sections, as shown in the example in Figure 4.11.

Your assessment criteria:

**Learning aim B: Understand how to prevent accidents and incidents and carry out risk assessments**

**P3** Explain how to undertake risk assessments in an early years setting.

**D2** Evaluate the extent to which risk assessment contributes to effective early years practice in a selected early years setting.

### Research

Carry out an audit of the equipment and resources for preventing the spread of infection in your placement or work setting. Make a list of everything that you find.

### Research

Download the document 'Risk Assessment of Children's Play Areas' from the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents ([www.rosopa.com](http://www.rosopa.com)). Investigate the process for conducting risk assessments in your placement or work setting. Examine the forms used for recording risk assessments. Write a report that evaluates how the risk assessment process contributes to effective early years practice when supervising a group of children playing outside.

Figure 4.11 A risk assessment for an outdoor activity

Area/activity	Hazards	Risks (to children, staff and parent helpers) Level of risk (H/M/L*)	Evaluation/action plan
Children planting bulbs outside in the nursery garden	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Children will be using gardening tools and digging in soil.</li> <li>Children will be exposed to the weather, insects, potentially dangerous objects (broken glass, poisonous plants, dog faeces).</li> <li>Children's security is more vulnerable outdoors.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Injury (L)</li> <li>Infection (L)</li> <li>Sunburn (L)</li> <li>Bee/wasp stings or insect bites (L)</li> <li>Wandering off the premises (L)</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Check the garden and outdoor area for any hazards and remove if necessary. Check the security of fencing and locks on gates and make secure. Encourage the children to practise using gardening tools beforehand (e.g. in their play).</li> <li>Ensure that the children wash their hands thoroughly after the activity.</li> <li>Check the weather: apply sunscreen and supply sunhats or supply rainwear, as necessary.</li> <li>Check staff's and children's health records for any bee or wasp allergies. Take necessary precautions</li> <li>Ensure there are enough staff members present to supervise the children at all times.</li> </ol>

\* Level of risk: H = high, M = medium, L = low

## Safety on outings

There are different risks involved when taking children out of the setting. For example, the outing may involve travelling on public transport, a different environment or children being involved in different activities.

Practitioners must follow the policies and procedures for safety on outings and take all the necessary precautions to prevent accidents and incidents from occurring. A full risk assessment must be completed, including:

- the required adult to child ratios for supervision (this will usually require more adults than the normal ratios)
- the hazards that may be present and the precautions that staff will take
- the weather conditions and how staff will accommodate these
- any specific, individual needs of the children (such as allergies and special dietary requirements)
- the times of departure and return to the setting
- a register of all the children attending.

Your assessment criteria:

**Learning aim B: Understand how to prevent accidents and incidents and carry out risk assessments**

**P5** Describe policies and procedures which must be followed when taking children on outings from an early years setting.



Practitioners must follow safety procedures when taking children on visits outside the setting

## Policies and procedures for accidents and incidents

Emergency situations can create shock and panic in early years settings. Policies and procedures provide a framework to support practitioners in these situations and help them to use best practice, following health and safety guidance. Most early years settings will have policies and procedures for a number of emergency situations, including:

- responding to an accident, calling for emergency help (including an ambulance) and reporting and recording procedures
- basic first aid procedures
- responding to a missing child
- evacuating the setting, for example in the case of a fire or bomb scare.

## How to respond to accidents

Accidents in early years settings may involve falls, sharp or dangerous objects, poisonous substances, fire or water and can result in injuries such as cuts, burns, broken bones and shock. It is very important that you know exactly what to do in response to an accident. The children involved will be frightened and will rely on you to remain calm.

## Principles of first aid

Every early years setting must have at least one designated first aider who is trained in the principles of first aid for young children and who is responsible for attending to first aid situations. Their duties will include recognising and responding appropriately to:

- bleeding injuries
- burns and scalds
- choking
- unconsciousness
- shock, including **anaphylactic shock** and electric shock
- lack of pulse and breathing (including **resuscitation** procedures).

If an accident occurs, the calm and prompt attention of a trained first aider can save a child's life. The main principles of first aid are as follows:

- Check if the child is breathing and has a pulse – if not, begin resuscitation immediately.
- If necessary, telephone 999 (or 112) for an ambulance.

### Your assessment criteria:

#### Learning aim C: Understand how to respond to emergencies

- P6** Describe procedures in an early years setting for:
- responding to an accident
  - responding to a missing child
  - evacuating the setting
  - calling for emergency help.
- M4** Discuss the importance of policies and procedures for prevention of incidents and emergencies in a selected early years setting.
- D3** Evaluate the extent to which policies and procedures for response to emergencies in early years settings contribute to children's health and safety.



Make sure you know where the first aid box is kept

#### Research

Investigate the first aid work of the St. John Ambulance at [www.sja.org.uk](http://www.sja.org.uk).

Make a note of the information you might need in order to access one of their first aid training courses.

Check if the child is conscious – if not, make sure their airway remains open by placing the child in the **recovery position**.

- Check for signs of bleeding, head injury, broken bones or shock.
- Do what you can to manage any injuries, using the setting's first aid kit.
- Reassure the child and try to keep them calm.



The recovery position

## When to call an ambulance

A child's condition can deteriorate very rapidly following an accident and this can put their life at risk. It is very important for you to know when emergency medical help may be needed. You should always seek urgent medical attention or call an ambulance if a child in your care has any of these symptoms:

- a very high temperature (39°C or above)
- breathing difficulties
- a **convulsion** or fit
- becomes unconscious
- severe bleeding, burns or scalds.

## Accident and incident reports

It is vital that staff record any accidents or incidents with children. Early years settings have a legal duty to report any incidents and should complete the special forms for this purpose. The first aider or practitioner involved should take great care to record all the information about the incident clearly and accurately and to sign and date the record.

#### Key terms

**Anaphylactic shock:** an extreme and sometimes life-threatening allergic reaction, usually to certain foods, drugs or insect stings

**Convulsion:** violent, uncontrollable contractions of muscles, sometimes known as a seizure or a fit

**Recovery position:** a position used in first aid that enables an unconscious casualty to breathe and prevents choking

**Resuscitation:** also known as CPR: manually keeping a person's heart and lungs working when their heart has stopped beating and they are not breathing

#### Research

In your placement or work setting, find out:

- who the designated first aider is
- where the first aid kit is kept and what it contains.

Make a list of the contents of the first aid kit in your placement.

#### Research

Investigate the regulations for carrying out risk assessments in the Safeguarding and Welfare requirements of the Early Years Foundations Stage at: <http://www.education.gov.uk>.

Investigate the accident forms in your placement or work setting.

What information is included on the form?

## Missing children

Children do occasionally go missing from early years settings, although it is relatively rare. This is a particular concern when taking children on outings away from the setting. The security measures in place should ensure that children are safe at all times. However, if a child does go missing, it is very important that you know how to respond. The procedure should include the following:

- inform the manager of the setting (or person in charge)
- immediately begin an organised search, checking all areas of the setting
- make sure that staff members communicate with each other (e.g. using mobile phones)
- supervise all the other children and make sure they are safe
- if the missing child is not found immediately, inform the parents or carers and the police
- make a full written report of the incident
- inform the relevant authorities (e.g. Ofsted).

## Evacuating the setting

There are many different reasons why an early years setting may need to be evacuated, for example a bomb scare, fire, gas leak or intruder(s) on the premises. All early years settings are required to have procedures for evacuating children safely. Staff should practise the routine during regular drills so that everyone knows exactly what to do. It is extremely important that you remain calm. You should reassure the children and explain to them what is happening, using clear and simple language. The person in charge should direct everyone to the **assembly point** and take a register to check that everyone (children and adults) has been safely evacuated. No-one should leave the assembly point or return to the building until the person in charge has authorised them to do so.

### In case of fire

If the setting has to be evacuated because of fire, the procedure should be as follows:

- Raise the alarm by telephoning 999 (or 112).

Your assessment criteria:

**Learning aim C: Understand how to respond to emergencies**

- P6** Describe procedures in an early years setting for:
- responding to an accident
  - responding to a missing child
  - evacuating the setting
  - calling for emergency help.

### Key term

**Assembly point:** a designated place where people should gather after evacuating a building in the event of an emergency

### Research

*Have you been involved in a fire drill in your placement or work setting?*

*Investigate the procedure and make sure that you know what to do in case of a fire.*

*Compare your notes with a colleague and discuss the importance of an effective evacuation policy in helping to protect children's health and safety in an early years setting.*

- If possible, close all windows and doors as you leave the building, to minimise the spread of the fire.
- Remain calm and reassure the children.
- Evacuate the children from the building, following the procedure of the setting, including specific procedures for infants or children with special needs.
- Do not return to the building until authorised to do so.

## Calling for emergency help

Emergency situations often cause panic and can affect the judgement of the people involved.

As an early years practitioner, you must remain calm and professional in emergency situations. If emergency services are required, you should do this by telephoning 999 (or 112) and communicating the following information clearly and accurately:

- which emergency service is required (ambulance, police and/or fire and rescue service)
- a contact telephone number
- the exact location of the incident
- the type and seriousness of the incident
- the number and approximate ages of any casualties involved, if possible.

## The importance of policies and procedures

The consequences of accidents and other emergencies can be life-threatening and practitioners have a responsibility to follow health and safety guidelines and legislation. Settings must have policies and procedures in place to deal with emergencies and they must be able to produce these as evidence that the setting is fulfilling statutory requirements, such as those set out in the Early Years Foundation Stage (2012).

### Case study

Adam is the playwork supervisor at Young Explorers Out of School Club. He works with children aged four to eight years. He is reviewing the procedures for evacuating the premises and is planning to organise a fire drill next week.

1. Describe the key elements of the evacuation procedure that should be in place at Young Explorers.
2. Discuss the importance of having fire and evacuation procedures to support children's health and safety.



All early years settings must have procedures for evacuating children safely

Your assessment criteria:

**Learning aim C: Understand how to respond to emergencies**

- M4** Discuss the importance of policies and procedures for prevention of incidents and emergencies in a selected early years setting.
- D3** Evaluate the extent to which policies and procedures for response to emergencies in early years settings contribute to children's health and safety.



Make sure you know how to contact the emergency services

# Assessment criteria

This table shows you what you must do to achieve a Pass, Merit or Distinction.

Pass	Merit	Distinction
<b>Learning aim A:</b>		
<b>1 Understand the importance of complying with relevant health and safety legislation and regulations</b>		
<b>2 Understand how to prevent the spread of infection</b>		
3A1.P1 Describe how legal requirements affect practice in early years settings using examples relevant to the home country:  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>to promote the good health of children</li> <li>to prevent the spread of infection</li> <li>for risk assessment</li> <li>for organisation of the environment</li> </ul>	3A1.M1 Discuss reasons why early years settings must comply with legal requirements for health and safety.  3A2.M2 Analyse how procedures in early years settings prevent the spread of infection.	3A.D1 Assess the ways in which legislation and procedures in early years settings contribute to children's health and wellbeing.
3A2.P2 Explain why it is important to control the spread of infection in an early years setting.		
<b>Learning aim B: Understand how to prevent accidents and incidents and carry out risk assessments</b>		
3B.P3 Explain how to undertake risk assessments in an early years setting.	3B.M3 Analyse the role of adults in early years settings in preventing accidents to babies and children, with examples.	3B.D2 Evaluate the extent to which risk assessment contributes to effective early years practice in a selected early years setting.
3B.P4 Explain common hazards and how adults could prevent accidents to babies and children in an early years setting to include:  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>selecting appropriate resources</li> <li>adequate supervision of children.</li> </ul>		
3B.P5 Describe policies and procedures that must be followed when taking children on outings from an early years setting.		

Pass	Merit	Distinction
<b>Learning aim C: Understand how to respond to emergencies</b>		
3C.P6 Describe procedures in an early years setting for:  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>responding to an accident</li> <li>responding to a missing child</li> <li>evacuating the setting</li> <li>calling for emergency help.</li> </ul>	3C.M4 Discuss the importance of policies and procedures for prevention of incidents and emergencies in a selected early years setting.	3C.D3 Evaluate the extent to which policies and procedures for response to emergencies in early years settings contribute to children's health and safety.