



RISK ASSESSMENTS

Why we risk assess, and the balance between benefit and risk:

At Little Learners we aim to offer a wide range of exciting and engaging learning opportunities to help develop children's foundation skills. In any situation where there are children working and playing together there are risks but there are also benefits.

We take the health and safety of children very seriously and assess each situation by considering the potential risks as well as the benefits and then through discussion we can decide if the risks can be managed appropriately and that the benefits are valid, reasonable and productive in moving children's learning forward. We ensure we include the children in these discussions, making risk assessment into learning opportunities, to support children's critical thinking.

The following risk assessments cover the main areas of the indoor and outdoor environment. The Daily Safety Checklist covers our considerations before opening up the environment to parents and children each morning.

Further risk assessment areas are covered in our following policies, which are provided to parents/carers on registration and available on our website:

Area of risk	Policy containing details
Administration of prescription and non-prescription medications	Administering Medication policy
Allergic reactions in children and adults	Allergies policy
Concerns and complaints received, the nature of which may pose a risk to children or adults	Concerns and Complaints policy
Emergencies, evacuations and lockdown events and associated threats	Fire Safety, Emergency Evacuation and Lockdown procedure
Minimising the risk of fire and safeguarding children and staff if a fire were to take place	Fire Safety, Emergency Evacuation and Lockdown procedure
Minimising the risk of illness and infection spreading through the setting, as well as safeguarding children when a child is taken to hospital	Illness, Health and Infection policy
Safeguarding children when they are collected late or uncollected	Late Collection or Uncollected Child policy
Minimising the risk of children being lost or missing, as well as safeguarding children and adults when such an event has taken place	Lost or Missing Child policy
Various areas of risk	Safeguarding policy
Safeguarding children and staff when visitors are on the premises	Visitors policy

All risk assessments and policies are reviewed yearly to ensure they are up-to-date and relevant, however an assessment will be made immediately if there is an incident or if an area of the environment is adapted or changed in any significant way.

EYFS Statutory Framework requirement

3.65. Providers must ensure that they take all reasonable steps to ensure staff and children in their care are not exposed to risks and must be able to demonstrate how they are managing risks. Providers must determine where it is helpful to make some written risk assessments in relation to specific issues, to inform staff practice, and to demonstrate how they are managing risks if asked by parents and/or carers or inspectors. Risk assessments should identify aspects of the environment that need to be checked on a regular basis, when and by whom those aspects will be checked, and how the risk will be removed or minimised.

DAILY SAFETY CHECKLIST (before children arrive each morning)

DATE	
DETAILS	TICK OR COMMENT
OUTDOOR ENVIRONMENT	
Side gate to garden is locked	
Storage shed is locked	
No litter in garden	
Check for open drain covers	
Check for trip hazards, cracks or holes in paving	
Check steps or changes in level outdoors are free from leaves or other obstruction	
Check for broken/unsafe outdoor equipment and remove if necessary	
Check for animal faeces	
Empty large collections of rainwater which might be a drowning hazard	
Check for broken branches overhanging the garden area	
INDOOR ENVIRONMENT	
Check toilets and sinks are clean and there is sufficient toilet paper, soap and hand towels	
Check nappy changing area is clean and has sufficient nappy sacks and cleaning products (both out of reach of children)	
Check for broken/unsafe indoor equipment and remove if necessary	
Check storage cupboard is locked	
Check hatch doors to the stage (in main hall) are closed securely	
Check fire escape doors are closed	
Check kitchen for anything that is sharp or hazardous is out of children's reach and kitchen doors are closed	
Check door from kitchen to garden is closed	
Check floor of the main entrance hall and steps is dry and free from obstruction	

BENEFIT AND RISK ASSESSMENT

Risk Matrix						
		Consequence				
		Insignificant	Minor	Moderate	Major	Catastrophic
Likelihood	Almost certain	Moderate	High	High	Extreme	Extreme
	Likely	Moderate	Moderate	High	Extreme	Extreme
	Possible	Low	Moderate	High	High	Extreme
	Unlikely	Low	Low	Moderate	High	High
	Rare	Low	Low	Low	Moderate	High

RISK ASSESSMENT MATRIX KEY

L	Likelihood
C	Consequence
R	Risk

ACTIVITY /HAZARD	BENEFIT	POTENTIAL RISKS	RISK ASSESSMENT MATRIX			ELIMINATION, MINIMISING OR CONTROL METHODS	WHO IS RESPONSIBLE?	COMMENTS/ PROGRESS
			L	C	R			
INDOOR ACTIVITIES								
Malleable play	Promotes physical development – motor skills	Allergic reactions to materials. Consumptions of materials	Possible	Minor	Moderate	Avoid common allergens Check individual child allergy information, provided by parents Ensure liquids are diluted appropriately Children to follow the no-consumption rule in this area	Staff Parents Children	
Access to toy storage boxes	Encourages individual preference (self-selection) Increasing vocabulary, interaction and communication	Falling toys Falling boxes Trapped fingers or toes	Possible	Moderate	High	Ensure boxes and baskets are not overloaded Provide low storage for boxes Adults to model safe handling techniques	Staff Children	

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			L	C	R			
Toys on floor	Encourages awareness of surroundings Promotes physical development – learning to navigate space Promotes learning to keep the environment in order Exploration of toys using floor Interaction with other children	Slips, trips & falls	Possible	Minor	Moderate	Set expectations about how much can be out at any one time and encourage children to tidy up what they are no longer playing with. Spills on floor to be mopped up straight away Objects on floor that could be a trip hazard to be picked up.	Staff Children	
Cutting implements (e.g. child safe scissors, hole punches)	Promotes motor skills and creative play	Cuts, skin pinches, pressure injuries	Possible	Minor	Moderate	Talk to the children about the safe use of scissors, and which materials are allowed to be cut e.g. for paper and card, not hair or clothes. Model safe use and transport of scissors and hole punches	Staff	
Open shelves	Encourages individual preference (self-selection)	Children climb or hang on shelves, causing the child or shelves to fall	Unlikely	Minor	Low	Talk to the children about the safe use of open shelving. Encourage the children to find an adult if a child is using the shelves incorrectly.	Staff Children	
Small toys and loose parts	Imaginative play Interactive play Expressive arts and design Open ended play Sensory exploration	Choking Small parts inserted into nostrils or ears Children throwing small objects	Possible	Moderate	High	Always supervise children when using loose parts Consider the age, developmental stage and ability of each individual child before allowing them to play with small toys and loose parts. Only use these toys in a designated area where vulnerable children don't have access	Staff	

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OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES								
Contact with soil	Exposure to beneficial bacteria Sensory exploration Normal childhood experience Learning about checking for contaminants before exploring	Ingesting soil Ingesting, absorbing contaminants in soil	Unlikely	Minor	Low	Check soil before play Children to follow the no-consumption rule in this area Do not use any manure or chemicals in the garden Involve the children in checking soil area for contaminants before play Educate children on the importance of handwashing after playing outside	Staff Children	
Water play	Interactive play Sensory exploration Physical development (motor skills through mixing, tipping, pouring, stirring, experimenting) Using imagination Numeracy Understanding the World Science (changing the state of materials) Sense of ownership Promotes learning to keep their environment in order, and responsibility to the group	Children getting cold Wet clothes Slipping on wet ground Ingestion of stagnant water Tripping over water play toys left on ground	Possible	Minor	Moderate	Supply puddle suits and wellies Consider the outdoor temperature when providing water play Staff to regularly check whether ground is getting too wet and move water play elsewhere or clean spills where possible Regular cleaning of water play toys to prevent mould/dirt build up Children to follow the no-consumption rule in this area Set expectations about how much can be out at any one time and encourage children to tidy up what they are no longer playing with. Empty water containers at the end of each day and leave them to drain overnight	Staff Parents Children	

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Sand play	Interactive play Sensory exploration Physical development (motor skills through mixing, tipping, pouring, stirring, experimenting) Using imagination Promotes learning to keep their environment in order, and responsibility to the group	Sand getting into eyes Slipping on loose sand on the ground Ingesting sand Contaminants in sand	Unlikely	Minor	Low	Monitor the number of children playing with the sand at one time and regulate if necessary Monitor the build up of sand on the ground Educate children on the importance of keeping sand in the sand pit Put cover on sand at the end of each day. Check for contamination daily, and include children in this	Staff Children	
Small natural materials (e.g. gravel, woodchip)	Sensory exploration Physical development (motor skills through mixing, tipping, pouring, stirring, experimenting)	Choking	Possible	Major	High	Any children who are likely to explore putting things into their mouths are identified and given greater supervision in this area Children encouraged to follow a no consumption rule in this area	Staff	
Plants	Connection to nature Open ended materials Expressive arts and design	Ingesting poisonous plants or non-edible plants Allergies Scratches and cuts on sharp plant parts	Unlikely	Moderate	Moderate	Ensure there are no known hazardous plants in the garden area Talk to children about the risk of eating plants Children encouraged to follow a no consumption rule in this area Children encouraged to wash their hands after play	Staff	
Small creatures (e.g. insects, slugs, snails, worms)	Exploring the natural world Encouraging a gentle, loving approach to all creatures	Ingesting creatures Bacteria and viruses from creatures Bites/stings from creatures Harming creatures	Unlikely	Minor	Low	Monitor which creatures children are investigating Educate children on the importance of being gentle with creatures Children encouraged to follow a no consumption rule in this area Children encouraged to wash their hands after play	Staff	

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Use of sticks	Gross motor skills Connecting with the natural world Imaginative play Interactive play	Injuring themselves or others	Likely	Minor	moderate	Educate children on the importance of checking their environment and only playing with large sticks in a large open area. Also on the importance of not touching another person with their stick	Staff	
Climbing equipment and free-standing equipment	Physical development – jumping, climbing, sliding, balancing Imaginative play	Slips, trips, falls Falling from a height Falling onto another child	Likely	Moderate	High	Give children regular safety talks before using the equipment and consider restricting numbers to avoid collisions and overcrowding. Give daily reminders about assessing risk in their play Check equipment and surroundings prior to use to ensure all parts are safe, undamaged and secure. Consider weather conditions prior to children accessing equipment.	Staff Children	
Ride on toys	Physical development Co-ordination Spatial awareness Balance Interactive play Creative play	Falling off ride on toys Colliding with other children Clothing trapped in moving parts	Likely	Minor	Moderate	Involve children in safety talks about using the ride on toys. Make sure children do not wear loose clothing in the garden to avoid tangling in wheels. Limit the number of wheeled toys in the garden and keep them on a hard surface area to avoid muddy/slippery wheels. Ensure all wheeled toys are checked regularly for damage	Staff Children	

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