

Writing risk assessments - EYFS 2012

The EYFS 2012 has changed the way we look at risk assessments forever! Gone is the requirement to write a risk assessment for everything the child does and plays with and yet more risk assessments for all types of outings.

We are now told in EYFS 2012 requirements 3.63 and 3.64 that we must decide for ourselves which risk assessments we write and which ones are done in our heads.

Of course we all know that a risk assessment does not, in itself, keep a child safe! It does, however, help us to show that we have carefully considered the risks and hazards of various situations and put controls in place to protect children from being hurt.

Written risk assessments are also useful for sharing with parents and showing as evidence at Ofsted inspection - lots of childminders say they go to pieces during their inspections so maybe it will be easier if information is written rather than trying to explain it all verbally during an already stressful time.

If you write risk assessments they should note...

- **Your name** - because you wrote it!
- Writing **date**
- **The hazard** - the area of the environment that need to be checked on a regular basis. This includes information about what might hurt a child / baby / adult on the premises (house or garden) eg open drain, plastic bags, dogs at the park etc
- **The risk** - how the child / baby / adult might be hurt eg broken leg, burns and scalds, cross contamination of bodily fluids, bite, strangulation etc

On outings - a risk might be that a child is lost or missing. It is important that you have a written 'lost / missing child procedure' for the Childcare Register (2010) and you can include information about lost / missing children on your outings risk assessments to complement your procedure. A note on outings risk assessments should be added to show that you are within ratios (yes I know it is obvious - but it is a requirement of the EYFS 2012 if you are writing outings risk assessments).

- **Controls** - the ways you will remove the hazard so the risk is minimised. This might include, for example, putting a cover over your drain, wearing gloves during nappy changes, teaching children not to touch animals etc.
- **Review date** - reviews should be at least annual and notes can also be added to risk assessments when things change.

Many childminders also have daily risk assessment / health and safety sheets which they tick off to show they have considered safety throughout the house and garden before children arrive. While these can be very helpful for showing evidence of your working practice they are not a requirement of the EYFS 2012.