

# Equipment for Play and Child Care/Safe Play

## **CHILDREN AT PLAY**

At all times the safety of children is paramount. Before a play activity commences Senior EYP and other staff present should:

- Ensure that there is adequate supervision for the play activity and children participating in the activity
- Refer to any child specific Risk Assessments as required, e.g. if a child has a broken arm, allergy etc
- Ensure that all toys and equipment are in good condition and are suitable for the age range and ability of children
- Ensure that all materials used are suitable for the task and play and are not going to increase the risk of harm to children or staff
- Ensure that the room layout is suitable for the play proposed

## **GENERAL ITEMS**

It is important that items for play, or which are used for child care, safety and transport are maintained in a safe condition. Staff must observe the following:

- All play equipment and toys must be checked on an ongoing basis for condition, cleanliness and safety
- Any damaged or defective items are to be removed from use immediately

## **EXTERNAL PLAY EQUIPMENT**

All areas that staff members and children may access could give rise to health and safety concerns. To ensure that there are no risks to the health and safety of anyone, regular checks are required of the areas and equipment.

A visual daily check should be undertaken by staff to check for obvious damage, broken glass and checking of all safety devices. They should also include checks for animal fouling, dangerous plants and growth.

The checks should include:

- a) Fencing and security (are there any signs of significant vulnerability, e.g. unlocked gates)
- b) Condition of impact surfaces
- c) Advisory and warning notices, such as 'Keep Gate Locked'
- d) Check each item of play equipment for:
  - damage
  - wear
  - corrosion
  - loose fixing devices
  - paintwork/finishes
  - lubrication of moving parts
  - sharp corners, protruding nails and screws, splinters
- e) Debris, fouling, sharp objects or refuse

All defects should be reported to the Setting Manager, who shall keep a record and take action to remedy the matter immediately e.g. cordon off area, clear area of debris, etc. Any issues relating to debris, fouling or refuse must be cleared up before children are allowed to play in the area.

## **PLAY WITH WATER AND SAND**

- Adequate supervision is needed to deal with frequent spillage.
- Wet Floor signs should be used at all times.
- When emptying and filling water trays, staff must use buckets or other suitable containers
- Before carrying out the activity, staff must ensure the appropriate equipment needed is at hand.
- When the activity is finished, the sand tray should be covered.
- Dispose of any sand that has spilt by sweeping up or placing in external refuse bin.
- After use, toys must be removed and the sand raked through.
- On a monthly basis, the sand should be sanitised by pouring a 5-litre bucket of sterile solution to each area of sand measuring 2 square metres which should then be raked thoroughly to distribute the solution.

## **FOOD PLAY**

- Diligent care must be taken to avoid using any food in play that could cause an allergic reaction if a known allergic child is present in the area of play.
- Any spillages should be cleared away immediately and wet floor signage used if food could cause a slip hazard.
- Children must be supervised to prevent them eating the play food.
- Play food should be disposed of:
  - after use if cooked or wet e.g. jelly, baked beans
  - regularly if dried e.g. cooked pasta/rice.

## **PETS/ANIMALS WITHIN THE SETTING**

Approval is needed from the Setting Manager If animals or pests are to be kept within the Setting, the Setting Manager will be responsible for ensuring the animal's welfare and the following:

- All housing and cages provide no safety risk to children, e.g. all wire is suitably protected
- Hygiene is maintained at all times
- Dirty sawdust and debris on the floor is cleared up without delay
- Close supervision is maintained then children are having contact with the animal/pet
- An assessment is made to the suitability of the pet/animal before purchase, and any allergies are accounted for before purchase
- Ensuring weekend and holiday arrangements are made

### **TOP TIPS**

- Play equipment and areas must always be checked by staff to ensure they are in a safe condition and that toys are suitable for the age range - this must be on an ongoing basis.
- External areas must be checked daily and before each use for any dangers before children enter the area to play.
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**This policy was agreed by the management team during: April 2017**