

6. Risk management plans for high risk activities and special events

What is a high risk activity or special event?

The answer to this question will be different for every organisation. A high risk activity or special event, due to their nature, will require extra planning to ensure that appropriate control measures are implemented to manage the identified risks. What your organisation deems to be a high risk activity or special event will be dependent on the nature of the activities or services which your organisation provides.

Why do you need to have risk management plans for high risk activities and special events?

Forward planning to identify risks and implement strategies can assist to reduce the possibility of children being harmed. It is important to recognise that in order for a child to suffer harm, there must be an opportunity for harm to arise. These opportunities can be reduced by developing specific policies to manage high risk activities and special events.

What happens if you feel that this section does not apply to your organisation?

If you have considered all the possibilities and are certain that this section does not apply to the activities you undertake in your organisation, then you must explicitly state this in your child and youth risk management strategy.

How do you draft risk management plans for high risk activities and special events?

Criteria or examples should be provided in your plan to guide an assessment of when an activity should be considered high risk and would therefore warrant a plan. For example you may wish to consider whether the activity or event:

- involves the participation of volunteers or people who are external to your organisation
- is to take place at an external venue or destination with a large amount of people and/or hazards (e.g. involving water hazards such as ponds, lakes or pools), and/or
- is to take place overnight or for a lengthy period of time.

It is important to note that these are just some examples of the types of things which you might consider to assist in determining if an activity or event is high risk.

Once you have determined that your organisation is undertaking a high risk activity or special event you must then draft your risk management plan.

Risk Management Process

The following is adapted from the Standards Australia's AS/NZS ISO 31000:2009 Risk management - Principles and Guidelines.

There are six steps to consider in the development of an effective risk management plan:

1. Describe the activity
2. Identify the risks
3. Analyse the risks
4. Evaluate the risks
5. Manage the risks and reassess, and
6. Review.

Step 1 – Describe the activity

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER*

- What is the activity?
- What is the purpose of the activity?
- What are your objectives in undertaking the activity?
- What are the elements of the activity from start to finish?
- Where is the activity taking place?
- What environmental factors need to be considered?
- Who is involved in the activity? Parents? Staff? Children? People external to the organisation?

* Please note that the examples provided are not an exhaustive list of the issues which would need to be included in your plan. You should assess your organisation's needs when determining which aspects need to be covered in your plan.

Step 2 - Identify the risks

In this step you need to consider, how might a child be harmed? You should, where possible, encourage people involved with your organisation, including children and young people, to assist with identifying the risks associated with the high risk activity or special event.

It is a good idea to use a checklist which identifies general risks that should always be considered for every high risk activity or special event. However, it is also important to brainstorm with the people involved with your organisation to ensure all potential risks that might result in harm to a child or young person for the particular high risk activity or special event which you are creating a plan for are identified.

The risks which you are identifying in this strategy are different to workplace health and safety processes which generally consider environment and equipment risks. These are important and should definitely be considered however, it is essential to also focus on the risks of physical, emotional or psychological harm to children which may occur.

It may assist to consider where these risks of harm may come from, for example:

- Will children need to be transported?
- Is it possible that a child could be injured or become ill?
- What would happen if an emergency occurred?
- Are there any risks presented by the physical environment or location of the activity?
- Will there be people external to your organisation involved in the activity?
- Are there accommodation requirements?

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

- Where or when might harm occur?
 - e.g. on play equipment in the park
 - e.g. a staff member giving a child a lift home unsupervised
- How might harm occur?
 - e.g. child may fall off monkey bars
- Why might harm occur?
 - e.g. child was not being adequately supervised

Step 3 - Analyse the risks

The purpose of risk evaluation is to make decisions, based on the outcomes of risk analysis. The level of risk will determine whether the high risk activity or special event is practical.

In this step you should consider –

A. How likely is it that the harm will occur? (Likelihood)

Likelihood	Almost Certain	Almost certain to occur in most circumstances
	Likely	Likely to occur frequently
	Possible	Possible and likely to occur at some time
	Unlikely	Unlikely to occur but could happen
	Rare	May occur but only in rare and exceptional circumstances

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B. What would happen if the harm did occur? (Consequence)

Consequence	Critical	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Critical incident. (e.g. Death or permanent disability of adult or child; high level of distress to other parties) Sustained negative publicity or damage to reputation from a national perspective or from the community welfare perspective.
	Major	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Multiple injuries requiring specialist medical treatment or hospitalisation; and/or major occupational health safety & welfare liability incident / issue. Major incident which damages public or parent confidence. One or more children are lost from the main group.
	Moderate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Serious injuries and/or illness. Complex welfare and/or health care issue. Serious disruption or incident, resulting in distress to children and adults.
	Minor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Minor first aid or minor occupational health safety & welfare liability incident / issue (e.g. minor cuts, bruises, bumps). Minor behavioural issues.
	Insignificant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No treatment required.

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Step 4 – Evaluate the risks

The fourth step requires you to evaluate the level of risk, which will depend on your answers to the questions asked at Step 3. For example, if a risk is likely to occur and the consequences could result in major harm to a child, then this would be considered high risk.

Below is an example of a risk analysis matrix for *analysing* and *evaluating* risks in organisational activities. To determine the *likelihood* of risk using this matrix, refer to the left hand column of the risk analysis matrix. Then use the impact information to determine the level of *consequence*. Finally, combine the *consequence* and *likelihood* rating to arrive at the *risk level*.

		Likelihood				
		Rare	Unlikely	Possible	Likely	Almost Certain
Consequence	Critical	Moderate	High	High	Extreme	Extreme
	Major	Moderate	Moderate	High	High	Extreme
	Moderate	Low	Moderate	Moderate	High	High
	Minor	Low	Low	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate
	Insignificant	Low	Low	Low	Moderate	Moderate

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Step 5 - Manage the risk

Standards Australia’s AS/NZS ISO 31000:2009 Risk management - Principles and Guidelines describes risk treatment as –

“a cyclical process of:

- assessing a risk treatment;
- deciding whether residual risk levels are tolerable;
- if not tolerable, generating a new risk treatment; and
- assessing the effectiveness of that treatment.”

Risk management options should consider the values and perceptions of people involved with your organisation and the most appropriate way to communicate with them.

You now should consider how likely it is for the risk to occur after control measures have been put in place, and how bad the outcome would be if the risk was to occur. If you assess that a risk is still highly likely to occur and the outcome could result in harm to a child then you may need to rethink the activity.

Step 6 - Review

Ongoing review is essential to ensure that the risk management plan your organisation develops for your high risk activity or special event is effective. Reviewing controls and responsibilities can be useful for future planning. You should identify in your strategy who will review the risk management plan after the event or activity.

Each stage of the risk management process should be recorded appropriately. A template is provided below to assist you with drafting your plans for high risk activities and special events.

Example Risk Management Plan for High Risk Activity:

Family day care - excursion to the park

STEP 1	STEP 2	STEP 3	STEP 4	STEP 5	STEP 6
<p>Describe the activity <i>Identify all elements of the event from beginning to end</i></p>	<p>Identify Risks <i>Something that could happen that results in harm to a child or young person</i></p>	<p>Analyse the Risk <i>Likelihood/ Consequences</i></p>	<p>Evaluate the Risk <i>The level of risk</i></p>	<p>Manage the Risk <i>Assess the options</i></p>	<p>Review <i>Nominate who will review after the event/activity</i></p>
<p><i>On a Monday four children aged 2, 3, 5 and 7 will be taken to the park by one family day care educator.</i></p> <p><i>They will be at the park for one hour.</i></p> <p><i>The mode of transportation will be driving.</i></p> <p><i>The park is</i></p>	<p>Children could be hurt in an accident</p>	<p>Likelihood - rare</p> <p>Consequences - moderate to critical</p>	<p>Low to Moderate</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure vehicle is roadworthy • Ensure staff member has a valid driver's license • Ensure children are in approved child restraints 	<p>Family day care educator who attends the excursion in consultation with relevant supervisor</p>
	<p>Children could suffer dehydration or sunburn</p>				

<p><i>bordered by a main road and has public toilets and a pond.</i></p> <p><i>The park is usually busy.</i></p> <p><i>There is an adjoining dog park.</i></p>	Children could injure themselves on play equipment				
	Children could be harmed by another park user				
	A child might get lost				
	Children could drown in the pond				
	A dog from the adjoining dog park could bite a child				

Template Risk Management Plan for High Risk Activity:

In addition to occupational health and safety concerns, a child and youth risk management strategy should analyse the risk of ‘harm’ to children and young people.

STEP 1	STEP 2	STEP 3	STEP 4	STEP 5	STEP 6
<p>Describe the activity <i>Identify all elements of the event from beginning to end</i></p>	<p>Identify Risks <i>Something that could happen that results in harm to a child or young person</i></p>	<p>Analyse the Risk <i>Likelihood/Consequences</i></p>	<p>Evaluate the Risk <i>The level of risk</i></p>	<p>Manage the Risk <i>Assess the options</i></p>	<p>Review <i>Nominate who will review after the event/activity</i></p>