

Outdoor learning areas: Guide to the education risk benefit assessment template

"Children and young people need to encounter some real risks if they are to respond positively to challenging situations and learn how to deal with uncertainty. This cannot be achieved by limiting them to supposedly safe environments. Therefore, providers of play opportunities have no choice but to offer situations in which children and young people can experience real, not make-believe, hazards"

From [Managing Risk in Play](#), Play England – Philip Wolmuth

Risk management

Risk is inherent within our education, care and everyday activities. The aim of managing risk is to minimise negative outcomes, **NOT** to eliminate risk and challenge for children.

In a risk benefit assessment, risk is measured in terms of a combination of the consequence and the likelihood of a negative impact balanced against the benefits (learning outcomes).

Risk assessment – purpose

The purpose of conducting a risk assessment is to identify:

- the source of the risk
- the consequence should the risk occur
- what measures are currently in place to control the risk and minimise negative outcomes
- what additional measures need to be implemented to further reduce the level of risk.

Benefit assessment – purpose

The purpose of conducting a benefit assessment is to:

- identify the potential learning opportunities
- determine short term or long term impact on learning outcomes should a risk be minimised or eliminated
- weigh up the learning outcome benefits against the risks.

Why conduct a risk benefit assessment?

A risk benefit assessment:

- provides written information and analysis that has supported decision making
- documents the benefits for children's learning outcomes
- demonstrates evidence of due diligence and governance
- captures actions taken to control adverse events and minimise the consequences should they occur.

Using the risk matrix to complete a risk benefit assessment

The matrix is a tool to assist you to determine a measure of risk based on the likelihood of an incident occurring and if it was to occur what would be the consequence. This can then be evaluated alongside the benefit (learning outcomes) of an activity or event.

WHS Risk Assessment Matrix		Consequences				
		First aid. Personal support or counselling	Medical or dental treatment.	Hospital emergency department (Out-patient)	Admitted to Hospital (In-patient)	Death, permanent disabling injury
Likelihood	Certain: to occur at some stage	Medium	High	High	Extreme	Extreme
	Likely: to occur	Low	High	High	Extreme	Extreme
	Possible: could reasonably occur	Low	Medium	Medium	High	Extreme
	Unlikely: to occur	Low	Low	Medium	High	Extreme
	Rare: not expected to occur	Low	Low	Medium	Medium	High

Extreme	Do not undertake the activity <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contact the Work Health and Safety team at Education.WHS@sa.gov.au or on 8226 1440 for guidance on risk reduction Consult with workgroup Health and Safety Representatives where available
High	Reduce the risk as far as reasonably practicable <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Escalate to site leader and/or local safety committee or management committee for review Consult with workgroup Health and Safety Representatives and affected parties Refer to department guidance on WHS safety management for risk control requirements
Medium	Activity may be undertaken <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider ways to further reduce the risk and refer to department guidance on WHS safety management Consult with workgroup Health and Safety Representatives and affected parties
Low	Activity may be undertaken safely <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitor the activity and controls to ensure the risk remains low