

Example risk benefit assessment – Outdoor learning areas

Site: XYZ Preschool
Date of assessment: 25/05/2025
Activity: Tree climbing
Benefit assessment
Description of the experience and environment where the risk has been identified: Climbing trees in the outdoor learning area - Potential falls
Benefits of activity for learning outcomes of children: Confidence through challenge Coordination and strength Problem solving – getting up and getting down Social interaction – helping peers Connection with nature Creative and imaginative play
Non-negotiable elements of this activity (determined after risk assessment): Impact surface under climbing branches (bark chips with 300mm depth or impact mats) Trees suitable for climbing to be identified by a green ribbon around the trunk Climbing rules to be developed with children and on display

Risk assessment					
Hazard identified	Preliminary risk assessment (no measures in place) (using risk matrix – consequences x likelihood)	Reduction or control measures	Who	When	Level of risk (control measures in place) (using risk matrix – consequences x likelihood)
Fall from tree	(Minor x Possible) Moderate	Bark chips or mats	Staff	Daily	(Minor x Unlikely) Low
Tree unsuitable for climbing	(Minor x Possible) Moderate	Lower limbs allowing accessibility removed	Arborist Groundsman	ASAP	(Minor x Rare) Low
Child climbs too high in the tree and unable to get down	(Minor x Unlikely) Low	Allow children to self-assess height with no peer pressure Assess what are children safe climbing practices Have an extendable ladder accessible is required	Staff and children	Review tree rules once per term	(Minor x Rare) Low
Tree branch breaks while child is climbing on it	(Moderate x Rare) Moderate	Arborist assessment to assess health and viability as climbing tree	Arborist	Yearly or as advised by the arborist	(Minor x Rare) Low
	Overall preliminary risk assessment: MODERATE				Overall level of risk: LOW

Education risk benefit assessment - Outcome		
BENEFITS outweigh RISK	Or	RISK outweighs BENEFITS
Plan prepared by:	Sue Smith, Teacher	
Prepared in consultation with:	GC and Site Leader	
Communicated to:	Parents through the newsletter and activity and rationale included in parent handbook Risk Benefit Assessment displayed on the notice board 3 rd party groups accessing the OLE (ie playgroups, parent groups)	
Venue and safety information reviewed and attached	Yes / No	Comment if needed: Site map identifying climbing trees
Review plan	Beginning of each year with new cohort of children	
Reminder: Monitor the effectiveness of controls and change if necessary. Review the risk assessment if an incident or significant change occurs.		

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

Action required:

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