

Workplace Hazards in Child Care

This fact sheet is for students undertaking work experience programs, and for their host employers. It can be used as a tool to assist with task planning, and to develop appropriate induction, training and supervision to minimise any risk to students while they are 'at work'.

Students must be given instruction, and must be supervised at all times. Consideration must always be given to hazards when allocating tasks. If any risk exists, students must NOT undertake the activity.

| Hazard | Possible Harmful Effects | Possible Employer Action to Prevent Injury / Illness | Preventative Action Students Can Take |
|---|---|--|---|
| Slippery floors and trips Objects on floors (e.g. children's toys) | Slips, trips or falls | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Provide floor mats ◆ Require use of non-slip shoes ◆ Keep floors clean ◆ Use signs to warn of temporarily slippery surfaces | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Clean up spills quickly <p>Keep area clear of toys etc.</p> |
| Cleaning products Sanitisers | <p>Skin contact may cause irritation or dermatitis</p> <p>Vapours may cause headaches or other respiratory problems</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Use the least hazardous product for each job ◆ Label all containers ◆ Provide Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS) ◆ Provide appropriate PPE | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Use personal protective equipment (PPE) when provided – this could include rubber gloves, eye protection ◆ Read safety information on MSDS |
| Contact with public/parents | Stress, criminal violence, physical attacks | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Arrange adequate security ◆ Provide adequate outside lighting ◆ Schedule appropriate numbers of staff in line with ratios ◆ Provide emergency response training | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Follow procedures regarding security and contact with the public/parents ◆ Report any concerns immediately |
| Manual handling (bending, reaching, stretching, pulling, lifting, repetitive motions) | Musculoskeletal disorders, including sprains and strains | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Undertake risk assessment of all manual handling tasks ◆ Schedule regular breaks, rotate jobs and share workloads ◆ Encourage team lifts ◆ Train staff in safe manual handling techniques | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Follow instructions and training ◆ Seek help when you think a team lift is required ◆ Use appropriate clothing for safe movement, e.g. when squatting |
| Standing for long periods | Back injuries, varicose veins | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Provide floor mats ◆ Schedule regular breaks ◆ Rotate jobs | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Take breaks when scheduled |
| Storage of items | Falls from heights when storing / accessing materials | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Provide training in safe storage of items | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Store material according to your training |
| Items contaminated with blood or body fluids; | Blood-borne diseases | Students must NOT deal with body fluids or waste or clean contaminated waste | Students must NOT deal with body fluids or waste or clean contaminated waste |
| Fire | Burns and respiratory damage caused by flammable materials igniting or electrical fires | <p>All employees given fire training on induction and regular fire drills undertaken.</p> <p>Fire fighting equipment in strategic locations and regularly tested</p> | <p>Follow all emergency procedures</p> <p>Young person to be added to the list of staff for roll call in the event of a fire or drill</p> |
| Sexual harassment, work place bullying | Emotional stress, fear and anxiety, physical illness | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Establish work place policy ◆ Provide staff briefings or training | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Report any concerns immediately |