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SMART SAFETY

Safety is paramount when running a toy library, and there are many factors you will need to consider and plan for, including any potential risks posed by your chosen premises, whether your toys adhere to safety guidelines, or whether you are equipped for the inevitable accidents which will happen during play sessions. Your Local Authority may have existing procedures with which you will have to comply, but the following information will help you ensure that your project is as safe as possible.

Risk Assessment

Carrying out a risk assessment is the best way to immediately identify all potential risks posed by your premises / organisation's services. A risk assessment is simply a careful examination of what, in your work, could cause harm to people, so that you can then objectively decide whether you have taken enough precautions or should be doing more to prevent possible accidents. Additionally, the [Health and Safety Executive](#) has produced a fact-sheet, [Five Steps to Risk Assessment](#), which provides further information on the risk assessment process.

Potential Safety Risks

The following are some examples of potential risks and precautions which may apply to your toy library, and which should be included in any risk assessment carried out:

- **Risk of fire** - all doors should be free from obstruction. Fire drill notices should be displayed clearly, and fire alarms should be tested regularly.
- **Danger of scalding** - if hot beverages are provided for parents / carers whilst their children play, it is vital to ensure that an area for this service is kept separated from the children's play area. Hot drinks should never be left unattended.

- **Electrical accidents** - ensure that your premises has no exposed or hanging wires, and any heaters are free from obstruction. Also, make sure that all electrical appliances are tested and labeled.
- **Injury caused by damaged premises** - check for leaks, uneven floorboards, protruding screws and nails (especially in play areas), broken windows, loose hand rails, or any problems with outdoor surfacing.
- **Children injured during play** - some accidents during play cannot always be prevented, but you can limit the chances by only purchasing toys which bear the CE Mark and by displaying signs regarding the parent / carers roles in supervision and proper use of toys.

This list is by no means definitive - a good risk assessment will need to be specific to your library's premises and go into detail about the precautions which you feel are necessary for your own service.

Toy Safety

Your toy library should make every effort to ensure that all toys loaned are safe and age appropriate. Always check for the mandatory European Community (CE) symbol. This is a claim by the manufacturer that the toy produced meets the requirements of the EC Toy Safety Directive.

Fire Safety

It is vital to implement good fire safety policies within your toy library. Firstly, you should carry out a fire risk assessment to ensure all adequate fire safety measures are in place. You should also test the fire alarm regularly, remembering to change the batteries immediately if they are depleted. Fire drills will need to be carried out at least once a year, and all members / users should be given information on fire drill meeting points and associative procedures before they join.

Additionally, you should also regularly monitor escape routes and fire exit doors to ensure they remain unobstructed and provide an effective means of escape for the maximum number of staff / users / children who will be in your premises at any one time.



Toy Library Guidance: Series 2

Running a toy library in Scotland

First-Aid Regulations

The Health and Safety (First-Aid) Regulations 1981 requires employers to provide adequate and appropriate first-aid equipment, facilities and personnel to ensure their employees receive immediate attention if they are injured or taken ill at work.

What is 'adequate and appropriate' will depend on the circumstances in your workplace / voluntary organisation, and you should assess what your first-aid needs are. The minimum first-aid provision for any workplace is:

- A suitably stocked first aid box.
- An appointed person to take charge of first-aid arrangements.
- Information for employees about first-aid arrangements.

Smaller workplaces (such as a toy library) may only need the minimum provision. But it is important to remember that accidents and illness can happen at any time. First-aid provision needs to be available at all times staff / users are at the workplace. For more detailed guidance on complying with your first aid duties, see First aid at work: [The Health and Safety \(First-Aid Regulations 1981\)](#).

Coping with Accidents

No matter how many safety precautions you take when setting up and running your toy library, accidents will inevitably occur. Even in the best managed toy libraries children still unfortunately suffer trips and falls, and it is good practice to have set procedures for dealing with them and the consequences.

The following points offer some factors you will need to think about when planning your toy library's safety procedures:

- Do staff members / volunteers know what to do in the case of an accident occurring?
- Does your toy library have written procedure to follow?

- Have all members of staff / volunteers been made aware and read this procedure?
- Do staff / volunteers know the location of the nearest emergency service / hospital?
- Is there an accessible telephone?
- Have staff / volunteers had appropriate first aid training?
- Does your toy library have a first aid box?
- Have users been given information on safety procedures when they joined?

Accident Aftermath

If a child does have an accident, parents / carers will understandably expect any injury to be taken seriously and for any necessary treatment / first aid to be administered quickly and efficiently. If parents request any further investigation of the accident, make sure you take their concerns seriously. Furthermore, try to keep parents / carers updated on any remedial action taken so that they will know that a similar accident is unlikely to happen again.



Smart Play Network Members Support

Member you have access to telephone and email support. For more information about the topics covered in this guidance sheet, or any other queries you may have about your group, please contact us using: 0131 554 2620 or admin@smartplaynetwork.org

It is free to be a member of Smart Play Network, for more information on how to become a member please refer to our website: www.smartplaynetwork.org.