

Risk assessment considerations for children accompanying carers to JCU Workplace, a JCU Research Station or a JCU Field Trip

HSE-INFO-017

This information sheet has been developed to assist carer(s) to identify hazards, risks and controls particular to children at the workplace.

The University is required to, so far as is reasonably practicable, ensure the health and safety of staff and other persons affected by its activities at the workplace. A comprehensive risk assessment specifically addressing the presence of children must be developed by carers wishing to have a child or children accompany them on a field trip or on trip to a research station. The risk assessment forms part of the approval requirements. All risk assessments must be completed in Riskware.

Why are Children Different to Other Participants?

Children:

- Do not possess experience, knowledge or judgment about workplace hazards and safe work practices.
- Are unlikely to know if they are being exposed to health and safety risks and may find it hard to speak up even if they do.
- May be energetic and enthusiastic, but shy about asking questions or making demands of adults.
- Are often keen to please so they might try to imitate what they see adults doing.
- May skylark near machinery or chemicals etc. without realizing the risks involved.
- Can be inquisitive and adventurous and their natural curiosity may lead them into dangerous situations in workplaces.
- Do not have the experience and maturity to respond appropriately in unexpected, dangerous or stressful situations.
- May be vulnerable to bullying and harassment.
- Are still growing and will be comparatively weaker and have less stamina than adults.
- May cause a distraction to JCU staff performing work

Considerations when conducting a risk assessment:

Hazard	Risk Considerations	Possible Control Measures
Access to hazardous areas	<p>Can the child gain access to hazardous areas without their carers knowledge?</p> <p>Can the child accidentally lock themselves into hazardous areas e.g. cool rooms, large freezers?</p> <p>Can the child fall from a height e.g. excavations, unprotected balconies, windows?</p> <p>Are all ladders inaccessible to the child?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inspect the area for slips, trips and fall hazards. • Install physical barriers, such as locked cupboards /storage areas, guards, gates and fences. • Set up separate areas for the child, e.g. safe play areas. • Secure ladders, heavy goods and equipment.
Work activities	<p>Consider each work activity being conducted by staff, students, affiliates and volunteers.</p> <p>How will the child's presence increase the risk to the worker, others and the child?</p>	
Supervision	<p><i>Consider what level of supervision is required based on the child's age and the hazards and risks at the workplace.</i></p> <p>Who is going to supervise the child when the carer is conducting work / unavailable?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two carers have been identified for the child. At least one carer will be dedicated to supervising the child at all times. • A child under the age of 5 require close (within arms reach) supervision around bodies of water.
Equipment, plant, machinery	<p>Can the child access hazardous equipment, plant, machinery?</p> <p>Does the storage, location and height of items pose a risk to the child (e.g. can items be knocked over)?</p> <p>Can the child be struck or have clothing caught in plant / equipment?</p> <p>Is there a risk of child and mobile plant interaction?</p> <p>Can the child access to switches on plant and machinery?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Machinery is not left with the engine running without adult supervision. • Keys are removed from machinery when not in use, and stored in a separate locked location. • All machinery is fitted with appropriate safety guards.

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Hazardous materials	Is the child at risk of exposure to a hazardous material e.g. biological, chemical?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hazardous chemicals are stored in locked / restricted locations. • Chemicals are not stored in food or drink containers or containers that could be mistaken for food / drink. • The child will be kept away from areas where chemicals are being sprayed or used. • The child is prohibited from entering the laboratory.
Electrical	<p>Can the child interfere with electrical installations?</p> <p>Can the child turn on switches that may pose an electrical risk to themselves or others?</p> <p>Can the child access live electrical cables?</p> <p>Is there a risk that the child may pour water, insert items into electrical equipment?</p> <p>Can warning tags be removed by the child?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Damaged or faulty electrical equipment such as power sockets, leads and appliances are removed from service. • Power points accessible to the child are protected by safety-shutters / plastic plug protectors. • Electrical appliances and leads are kept away from water. • Safety switches available and functional on all buildings. • Portable safety switches used.
Animals	<p><i>Because of their lack of experience and small size, children may be particularly at risk when they come into contact with animals. Consider the types of animals children may be exposed to / have access to at the workplace.</i></p> <p>Can the child be harmed by or harm animals?</p> <p>Do animals carry zoonotic diseases?</p> <p>Are hygiene facilities available (i.e. handwashing facilities)?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Restrict access to animal facilities through key locks / fencing. • The child will be immunized against identified zoonotic diseases. • Handwashing facility available (running water, soap and paper towel).
Water hazards	<p><i>Water hazards can include but are not limited to animal water troughs, low set rainwater tanks, animal dips, dams, wells, creeks and marine waters. Children under the age of five years are at particular risk of drowning and these risks need to be managed.</i></p> <p>Are there any water hazards at the workplace?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fencing / barricading of bodies of water. • Supervision of the child at all times when in close proximity to a water hazard. Note: level of supervision will be dependent on the child's age, swimming ability and type of water hazard.

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Emergency	<p>Are there any additional considerations for emergency procedures due to the presence of the child?</p> <p>Are first aid provisions suitable for the child?</p> <p>Does the child have any pre-existing medical conditions that may need to be managed at the workplace (e.g. allergies / asthma)?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carer is responsible for ensuring the child is escorted throughout any emergency. • Carer will provide and manage the implementation of the child's medical action plans and medication for any preexisting medical conditions (e.g. asthma action plan, anaphylaxis action plan).
Child Protection	<p>Consider accommodation arrangements?</p> <p>Can the child be harmed by others at the workplace?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supervision of child at all times by carer(s).
Carer(s)	<p>Is the carer familiar with the hazards and risk of the workplace / field trip location / research station?</p> <p>Is the carer aware of JCU insurance cover and its limitations?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carer added as a participant to the field trip / boating and diving register. • Carer provided with induction training. • Emergency contact details for the carer are available. • Carer provided with access to JCU insurance information sheets.

Further information:

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