

Considerations when completing a risk assessment for moving and handling children and young people with disabilities

Extract from:

SEN Casework and Development Team, Children and Young People's Service, Milton Keynes Council (2010) *Lifting and Moving of People: Guidelines for school and other educational establishments on manual handling operations* [These guidelines were adapted, with permission, from documents produced by Slough Borough Council].

In:

Cope, P. / Children and Young People's Services, Milton Keynes Council (2010) *Children and young people with medical and physical difficulties: Information for schools, early years and other community settings*. Milton Keynes: Milton Keynes Council. [Online at: http://www.milton-keynes.gov.uk/inclusion/documents/medical_handbook_master_Sept_10.pdf; accessed: 1.1.12]

In order to provide safe systems of work, risks need to be assessed. In Risk Assessment the aim is to identify the likelihood of an accident occurring and reducing the risk by planned controlled intervention. When a risk assessment is completed for an individual child or young person it should be discussed with the parents/carers as well as staff involved.

There are four elements of Risk Assessment to consider:

- The Task;
- Individual capabilities (of the person carrying out the task (i.e. the employee));
- The working environment;
- The pupil (being assisted in moving).

The Task

Does the task involve:

- Holding the load away from the body?
- Twisting and/or stopping?
- Excessive lifting lowering or carrying over distance?
- Likelihood of sudden movement (unpredictability of the pupil)?
- Frequent or prolonged physical effort?
- Inadequate rest or recovery periods?
- Handling whilst seated?
- Team handling?

Individual Capabilities

Does the task:

- Require strength, height, etc.?
- Require specialist knowledge and/or training?

- Pose a risk to pregnant employees or those with a health problem?

Working Environment

Are there:

- Space constraints?
- Uneven, slippery or unstable floors?
- Varied floor levels or surfaces (steps or slopes)?
- Extremes of temperature, humidity, etc.?
- Poor lighting?
- High noise levels?

The Pupil/Load

- Is s/he heavy?
- is s/he difficult to grasp?
- Is s/he unpredictable?
- Does s/he understand what is about to happen?

Are there any other risk factors relating to the child which have a bearing on how s/he may be safely handled, e.g. deformity, disability, contractures, compliance and understanding?

All these areas form the basis for both the assessment and the control measures that can be put in place to minimise risk and enable safe systems of work.