



Safety Threats for Child Safeguarding

Threats to well-being and ability to thrive

In order to write a child protection safeguarding policy, prevent incidents and injuries, and keep children safe, it is important to assess the risks. Not all threats carry the same impact or probability thus the risk varies. Use either the Probability x Impact Chart or Formula to score each threat or threat actor's risk of occurrence. Write in or circle specific threats beside the general ones listed.

Consider the immediate site location, as well as the general local or country infrastructure, and any locations that the organization might visit (field trips, transportation, etc.). Afterwards, go back through the risk scores and circle or highlight the highest risk scores and the most likely threat actors or hazards so that you address them first in creating controls or planning for them in the Safeguarding Policy.

	Risk Score
Physical Abusers (staff, volunteers, community members, care-givers, sex-tourists, teachers, donors, children/peers, other: _____)	_____
Pedophiles/Sexual Predators (staff, volunteers, community members, care-givers, sex-tourists, health care professionals, donors, children/peers, other: _____)	_____
Pornography & Sexually Inappropriate Content (videos, internet, books, magazines, conversations, radio, other: _____)	_____
Human Trafficking (labor, sex, organ, other: _____)	_____
Harmful Ingestible Substances (substances: drugs, alcohol, medicine, glue/huffing, other: _____)	_____
Mental abusers (other: _____)	_____
Drug & Weapons Dealers (_____, _____, _____)	_____
Gangs & Mafia (_____, _____, _____)	_____



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	Risk Score
Employers (_____, _____, _____)	_____
Illness & Disease (infections, malaria, dengue fever, cold/flu, stomach problems, typhoid, river blindness, yellow fever, other: _____)	_____
Animals (farm, wild, stray dogs, other: _____)	_____
Health & Sanitation (contaminated water, stagnant water, open sewage, open trash/garbage, used hygiene products/needles, other: _____)	_____
Hazardous Materials Storage (gasoline, oil, toxic substances, medicine, matches, weapons, other: _____)	_____
Sharp & Dangerous Implements (machetes, knives, farm tools, guns, other: _____)	_____
Environmental Hazards (trees – falling/climbing, holes, animals, poisonous plants, bodies of water, other: _____)	_____
Other: _____	_____



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The risks, which rated higher on your scale, need to be incorporated into your organization's child protection safeguarding policy. Think carefully about the situations in which these threats exist – off/on campus, special events, guest on campus, breaks, recess, travel from activities, bed-/bath-times, car rides, after-/before-program, etc.

When writing the policy, make sure to test the policy by running scenarios from the most likely cases. This will help you think of complexities which you might encounter and how to mitigate problems before they occur. Some questions to think about when writing and planning:

- How can hazards be minimized or corrected to reduce risk? What physical changes to the environment can we make to mitigate these risks?** Some examples may include: storing hazardous materials and sharp tools in secure areas, using safety gear, filling in holes, covering garbage, creating drainage for stagnant water, implementing sanitation practices, securing clean water, etc.
- How is the program and organization structured to avoid risks?** Create rules & guidelines which will help structure the organization, programs, and activities to minimize risks. This may include focusing on supervision and trainings and having strong screening procedures for volunteers and employees. Trainings on child abuse, policies, safety with hazardous materials, and use of safety equipment can help avoid risks.
- Does the child protection safeguarding policy provide a framework for handling a situation of these risks if it were to occur? Would staff know what to do if a situation occurred?** It is important to have a clear, transparent, standardized, and well-thought out plan for handling any situations or accusations which might occur. This does not necessarily mean having standardized penalties but rather a standardized process. Transparent policies and processes help build confidence in the organization's commitment to keep children safe. Remember: policies only work if the staff and children know and use them!

- * 1 There are different risks to children's health, development, likelihood of abuse of substances, and likelihood of being assaulted or abused based on who is using the addictive or barred substances. For example, if children witness substance abuse by an adult, they are at greater risk of being physically or sexually abused or neglected as well as more likely to be substance abusers when they are adults and more likely to have various health problems. Children using but in groups with non-users mean that there is a higher risk of child on child abuse, especially sexual abuse.
- 2 There are different risks to children based on if they are witnessing a parent or sibling being abused vs. being the victim. Also, there is the question of risk that a staff member or volunteer is a perpetrator of domestic violence and how that may carry over to the children they work with at your organization. Please also see information about ACEs (Adverse Childhood Experiences) to understand more.
- 3 Parent and family are important for children's psychological health and ability to be resilient after trauma or adverse circumstances. Even when it is in the best interest of the child to be separated (ex- a parent is abusive), separation can cause a set of psychological traumas and problem. In general, parents and families are important protective systems for children.
- 4 If a child does not have a long-term stable caregiver with whom to develop a close relationship, a child can develop many psychological problems, from attachment disorders to addiction problems to depression and suicide. Often children will try to attach themselves to short-term volunteers and visitors quickly and without caution; this is both a warning sign and also a result of an attachment disorder.