

Back injuries checklist.

Early learning professionals are the backbone of early childhood education, nurturing and educating children. However, the demands of the job can put significant strain on their backs, making them susceptible to injuries.

Back injuries in early learning services often result from repetitive lifting and bending, improper posture, stretching and overexertion. These injuries can range from mild muscle strains to more severe conditions like herniated discs, causing pain, discomfort, and potential long-term health issues.

These injuries can impact the running of the service as they may lead to extended time off work or reduced capacity of a staff member while at work. Additionally,

they can also impact a staff member personally, both physically and emotionally. Regular personal activities, such as driving, exercising and socialising, can be challenging or not possible while seriously injured.

Complete the following checklist. Where responses are 'no', this is an opportunity to reflect on workplace practices and make changes where possible.

For training tips, information, guidance and resources to support necessary change, go to SafeWork NSW at safework.nsw.gov.au.

Staff are trained in and use proper lifting and carrying techniques.	Yes	No
Staff are regularly reminded to bend their knees and use their leg muscles when lifting objects.	Yes	No
Lifting aids, such as steps to changing tables, are available and used to reduce the need for manual lifting.	Yes	No
These aids are regularly checked to be sure they're in good working condition and easily accessible.	Yes	No
Staff work together for lifting large or heavy items.	Yes	No
The service is equipped with adult ergonomic furniture and tools, such as adult sized chairs and trolleys, designed to reduce strain on staff.	Yes	No
Where possible, work areas are adjusted to accommodate staff members of various heights, such as by providing step ladders.	Yes	No
Equipment and furniture are regularly inspected and maintained to ensure they are in good working condition.	Yes	No

Any worn out furniture or equipment is promptly repaired or replaced.	Yes	No
Proper posture is taught and promoted during all activities, including feeding, changing nappies, and playing with children.	Yes	No
Regular rotation of tasks is scheduled to prevent prolonged periods of bending or lifting. For example, staff should take turns with nappy change times.	Yes	No
Staff are provided with resources on exercises that support back health.	Yes	No
The centre has a culture of safety where staff members feel empowered to voice concerns and report hazards.	Yes	No
Safety is a permanent agenda item at staff meetings to discuss and address potential risks.	Yes	No
Managers are aware of the need to report any incidents or injuries to Guild Early Learning, within 48 hours of occurring.	Yes	No

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