

Risk-benefit workshops

Are we afraid of offering children and teenagers the best possible play, recreational and outdoor educational opportunities?

In-house workshops

Provider support



Balmaha, a scheme by Judi Legg, a PLAYLINK Associate

Q. What is our aim?

A. Nothing less than to liberate providers from the grip of mistaken assumptions and to enhance providers' confidence in their ability to make sound judgments about the balance to be struck between benefits and risks.

'Liberating, informal but reassuring'

'Thought provoking and informative'

'Very beneficial to me, intend to implement ...not only in play equipment and playgrounds but also into ...Council risk management decision-making process.' H&S Officer

We know that many service providers are concerned at children's and teenagers' loss of independence and scope for action but are uncertain about how to balance their freedom to play with 'acceptable' risk levels: what should children and teenagers be allowed to do? What is 'an acceptable level of risk'?

Our **Risk-benefit workshops** are founded on an exploration of key values, the law, a respect for common sense, the skills and experience of providers, and a belief in the judgment-making capacity of service providers.

The **Risk-benefit workshop** is proving itself to be a powerful tool for the development of more engaging play, leisure and recreation, adventure and outdoor education opportunities. The workshops address a range of provision: parks, schools, non-staffed playgrounds, housing estates, after school clubs, outdoor education; adventure playgrounds, childminders and nurseries.



Warning! In case you didn't know

Significant advances

PLAYLINK Principal, Bernard Spiegel, is one of the authors of the HSE-endorsed guidance, 'Managing Risk in Play Provision: implementation guide'. That guidance introduces 'risk-benefit assessment', an assessment that makes explicit the need to balance the potential benefits of activities with the potential risks.

The risk-benefit approach has received additional endorsement in Lord Young's 'Common Sense, Common Safety' report to Government. He recommended shifting, 'from a system of risk assessment to a system of risk-benefit assessment'.



Tree swings. Aspects of PLAYLINK schemes
Too risky? Or just a return to common sense?



Workshop Content

Each workshop is designed to be responsive to the specific concerns of participants. We aim to cover at least the questions and topics below. We conclude with all participants doing a risk-benefit assessment

1. Culture of anxiety: how it affects judgement
2. Negligence: the difference between negligence and an accident.
3. Reasonableness: how can you show that you make reasonable judgements about risk levels?
4. What constitutes a serious injury?
5. Public perceptions of risk.
6. Risk-benefit assessment

In-house workshops

In-house workshops, or ones organised for a range of providers by a central authority, are particularly powerful. This is because decisions about risk are in practice affected by a diverse group of interests. For progress to be made in this area – to counter a culture of anxiety and risk-averseness - an informed organisational consensus needs to be developed and made explicit.

Who has attended

National Trust, Park departments, Schools, Housing Officers, Children's Services, Health and Safety Officers, Out of school provision; Play associations, Play Services, Playworkers.

Risk-benefit support

It is the responsibility of the provider to make judgments about the balance to be struck between risk and benefit. This responsibility cannot be out-posted.

It is PLAYLINK's view that there is some confusion about the role of external inspections and their relationship to risk-benefit assessment.

PLAYLINK supports and works alongside authorities, agencies and organisations that have begun to use – or want to start using -the risk-benefit assessment approach.

This support is designed to work with you on specific ‘real-time’ assessments. The nature of the support will be tailored to suit your particular situation. The strategic aim is to embed an in-house confidence and capacity to undertake risk-benefit assessments.

To discuss the risk-benefit assessment support, please [contact us](#).