

Psychosocial hazard checklist

Fifteen hazards, written for early childhood and OSHC services. Work through them with your team, rate the risk, and turn what you find into action. It looks at how work is set up, not at any one person.

From Yaga Smart, led by [Olga](#), Early Childhood Teacher, WHS-Qualified, Trainer and Assessor. Last updated 31 October 2026.

How to use it

1. Work through it with staff, not for them. Consultation is part of managing these risks.
2. Talk through the questions under each hazard. Some answers point to a risk and others to a strength, so note what worries you.
3. Rate each hazard using the risk matrix.
4. Choose your highest risks and agree actions, starting with changes to the work itself, not coping tips. Give each one an owner and a date, come back to it, and tell the team what changed.

Rate the risk

	Low severity	Medium severity	High severity	Extreme severity
Almost certain	Medium	High	Extreme	Extreme
Likely	Medium	High	Extreme	Extreme
Occasional	Low	Medium	High	Extreme
Rare	Low	Low	Medium	High

Severity

- Low:** distress that passes and settles within the shift, with no treatment or time off.
- Medium:** short-term distress, needing EAP or brief GP support and minor adjustments.
- High:** a significant stress reaction, needing medical care or days off. A claim is likely.
- Extreme:** serious psychological injury, prolonged absence or hospital care, or several workers affected.

Likelihood

- Rare:** could happen in exceptional circumstances, and not seen in the past 2 to 3 years.
- Occasional:** has happened before, or could reasonably happen each year.
- Likely:** happens several times a year, or under predictable conditions.
- Almost certain:** recurrent or sustained exposure.

1. Workload and job demands

- ☐ Are educators often multitasking across teaching, supervising, cleaning and admin at once?
- ☐ Do staff regularly miss meal or rest breaks because of workload?
- ☐ Do rooms often run at minimum ratios with no buffer, causing overload?
- ☐ Do educators feel constantly rushed, or unable to finish tasks on time?
- ☐ Do frequent last-minute changes add stress?

Severity	Likelihood	Overall risk
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2. Low or monotonous work demands

- ☐ Are some staff always given repetitive or low-skill tasks?
- ☐ Do educators feel under-stimulated or undervalued in their roles?
- ☐ Do tasks match each educator's qualifications and skills?
- ☐ Do casual or relief staff often sit idle without meaningful work?

Severity	Likelihood	Overall risk
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3. Traumatic or distressing events

- | | |
|--|---|
| ☐ Have staff had to manage serious child injuries or medical emergencies? | ☐ Are staff supported after violent or distressing incidents? |
| ☐ Do educators often hear disclosures of abuse or neglect from children? | ☐ Are debriefing or counselling services available after traumatic events? |

Severity

Likelihood

Overall risk

4. Role conflict or lack of role clarity

- | | |
|--|---|
| ☐ Are educators given conflicting instructions, such as focus on play but finish the paperwork? | ☐ Do duties change suddenly, without training or support? |
| ☐ Are roles and responsibilities clearly explained to new and casual staff? | ☐ Are expectations for leadership and room responsibilities clear? |

Severity

Likelihood

Overall risk

5. Low job control

- | | |
|---|---|
| ☐ Do educators have input into daily schedules and routines? | ☐ Can educators adapt learning activities to children's needs? |
| ☐ Can staff request shift or roster changes when needed? | ☐ Does micromanagement reduce people's autonomy? |

Severity

Likelihood

Overall risk

6. Poor support from supervisors or managers

- | | |
|--|---|
| ☐ Do supervisors regularly check in about workload and wellbeing? | ☐ Are educators confident management will support them at peak stress? |
| ☐ Is constructive feedback given consistently? | ☐ Are leaders available to discuss concerns? |

Severity

Likelihood

Overall risk

7. Poor co-worker support

- | | |
|--|---|
| ☐ Do team members help each other at busy times, such as meals and transitions? | ☐ Do educators feel isolated, or left alone with challenges? |
| ☐ Do staff share information and resources? | ☐ Are peer relationships generally positive and supportive? |

Severity

Likelihood

Overall risk

8. Interpersonal conflict and bullying

- | | |
|---|--|
| ☐ Are there reports of gossip, exclusion or cliques? | ☐ Do conflicts between staff escalate without being resolved? |
| ☐ Have staff reported repeated belittling or intimidation? | ☐ Are bullying complaints taken seriously and managed promptly? |

Severity

Likelihood

Overall risk

9. Workplace violence or aggression

- | | |
|---|---|
| ☐ Have families or visitors behaved aggressively towards staff? | ☐ Are staff trained to respond to violent or aggressive incidents? |
| ☐ Does children's behaviour, such as biting or hitting, put educators at risk of harm? | ☐ Are procedures in place to protect staff from threatening behaviour? |

Severity

Likelihood

Overall risk

10. Harassment, including sexual harassment

- | | |
|--|--|
| ☐ Do staff report inappropriate comments or treatment based on gender, race or age? | ☐ Is there a clear way to report harassment? |
| ☐ Have there been incidents of unwanted physical contact or harassment? | ☐ Do staff feel safe to complain without fear of retaliation? |

Severity

Likelihood

Overall risk

11. Inadequate reward and recognition

- | | |
|--|--|
| ☐ Are staff efforts regularly acknowledged? | ☐ Are extra responsibilities, such as mentoring new staff, recognised? |
| ☐ Do educators feel their contributions are valued? | ☐ Are professional development opportunities offered fairly to all staff? |

Severity

Likelihood

Overall risk

12. Hazardous or demanding physical environment

- | | |
|--|---|
| ☐ Are noise levels in rooms and outdoor areas monitored and managed? | ☐ Are educators exposed to illness without proper protective measures? |
| ☐ Are shade, ventilation and air conditioning adequate for staff comfort? | ☐ Do staff often do physically demanding tasks, such as lifting, bending and cleaning? |

Severity

Likelihood

Overall risk

13. Remote or isolated work

- | | |
|--|---|
| ☐ Do staff often work alone without immediate support? | ☐ Can help arrive quickly in an emergency? |
| ☐ Are there safe ways to check in with isolated staff, such as when working late? | ☐ Do staff on early or late shifts feel unsafe or unsupported? |

Severity

Likelihood

Overall risk

14. Poor procedural justice

- | | |
|--|--|
| ☐ Are policies and rules applied consistently to all staff? | ☐ Are mistakes and issues handled fairly and transparently? |
| ☐ Do some staff get preferential treatment for shifts or opportunities? | ☐ Do staff trust management to make impartial decisions? |

Severity

Likelihood

Overall risk

15. Poor consultation about change

- | | |
|---|--|
| ☐ Are staff consulted before major changes, such as rosters, policies or restructures? | ☐ Are staff supported with training or resources when roles change? |
| ☐ Do educators get clear communication about changes in advance? | ☐ Are changes reviewed for their impact on staff wellbeing? |

Severity

Likelihood

Overall risk

What we'll do about it

Hazard	Risk rating	What we'll change	Who owns it	By when	Did it help?

If someone needs support now, use your Employee Assistance Program if you have one, or call Lifeline on 13 11 14. In an emergency, call 000.

Based on the NSW Code of Practice for managing psychosocial hazards at work, and the common hazards listed by [Safe Work Australia](#). [Read the NSW Code](#). Checked 31 October 2026.

Important: please read

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