Health and Safety Checklist:

Personal protection:

- Safety glasses – always wear safety glasses at all times to protect eyes. Having children learn about safety culture and looking after themselves is an important lesson. Children are much more comfortable in safety glasses rather than chunky goggles. Other children and staff also to wear safety glasses if in close proximity.

- Wear shoes when working in the woodwork area

Supervision

- Ensure all children are given proper instruction on the correct use of all tools. Remind children that tools are for a purpose and are not toys. Draw attention to sharp points of tools. Keep a checklist of who has had the introduction to the four main tools (saw, hammer, screwdriver, hand drill)

- Initial ratios for safely introducing tools - Max - 1:3 Nursery, 1:4 Reception, 1:8 KS1

- Children must be monitored at all times. Initially with close supervision. When children are confident using tools ratios can be relaxed with the exception of sawing which is best monitored 1:1. As children become more confident and competent they can work independently. A staff member should always remain in line of vision of the woodworking area.

- Be aware of children with additional needs – some children will need additional support perhaps having a 1:1 ratio at all times.

Area

- Keep floor area clear – most accidents in design and technology are from trips and falls.

- Limit the number of children at workbench so they are not working in too close a proximity. Allow enough space so not to endanger others.

- Locate workbench in a protected space to minimise traffic and other distractions

Tools

- Sawing – Best done 1:1 - Ensure no children are watching from in front of the sawing area - practitioner to stand in this area to prevent children getting close to saw. Wood always to be clamped in a vice when being sawn. Staff to ensure vice clamped tight. Child sawing with Japanese saw to hold the saw with two hands or with western saw – with one hand and hand not holding the saw to be well away from the saw and holding the bench. After use saw to immediately be put out of reach.

- Hammering – when hammering into harder wood children will be using considerable force. After the gentle taps to get the nail standing up hold the wood well away from the nail before hammering hard. Embed this practice right from day one.

- When transporting tools hold by your side. Never run with tools.
- Caution when children are using vices, clamps and pliers that fingers to not get pinched. Ensure fingers kept away from clamping area. Close vices when not in use.
- Caution with Japanese nail puller. Really useful tool but only use closely supervised 1:1 so children only use it as a lever and do not 'yank' upwards towards themselves.
- Inspect tools periodically to ensure tools are in good repair or replaced when worn. Such as removing a hammer with a loose head or a dull saw is more likely to cause harm than a sharp saw as children will need more effort.
- Keep tools tidy – return to original locations. Tools must not be removed from the woodwork area.
- Avoid large tape retractable measures – they can recoil fast making the thin metal hazardous.
- Powerdrills should be avoided with young children due to high speeds and high torque. Children could easily lose control/ grip and clothing/ hair could become caught.

Caution

- Remove or make safe protruding nails from work before children take work home.
- Don't blow sawdust – as highly likely to end up in eye.
- Area to be kept as dust free as possible. Sweep up sawdust as necessary. Asthmatic children to wear dust mask if high levels of dust.
- Do not carry nails or screws in mouth. (this one is for me - not a good role model!)

Wood

- Avoid hardwoods. They are too difficult for young children to work with and there is a possibility that nails could rebound.
- Caution with plywood. It is hard and difficult to hammer into so better for older children. Plywood also has the tendency to splinter badly due to the glued layers.
- Avoid wood treated with chemical preservatives.
- Caution with MDF. Do not cut MDF in school due to excessive levels of irritating fine dust. It is also very hard so best drilled before hammering/ screwing.
- Check wood for splinters. Avoid very rough splintery wood. Rough wood can initially be sanded. Sand if the edge after sawing is rough. Caution: Splinters can be a source of blood poisoning.
- Do not store scrap wood with any nails sticking out

First-aid

- Ensure first aid kit available and know location. Know who is first aid qualified.

Additional Note on Safety Glasses:

Safety glasses should be wore at all times – by children and practitioners. It is important we model good practice. With hammering, there is a very small risk a nail could rebound. This can happen particularly with hard woods or knots in soft wood. This risk of impact with the eye is eliminated by wearing glasses.

Opinion has been divided on safety glasses. In many countries they are not used with hand tools and advice from PPE (personal protection equipment) professionals is divided in the UK. I believe because of this small risk is unwise not to wear eye protection. Wearing safety glasses eliminates the risk.

If we believe young children are old enough to do woodwork then they are also old enough to learn about looking after and taking responsibility for their bodies with appropriate safety protection. Children like the role play aspect of wearing eye protection and feeling the part. Goggles are more problematic as children often find them uncomfortable and are distracted by wearing then. There peripheral vision is actually restricted.

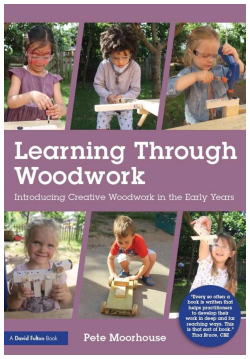
With safety glasses they quickly forget they have them on and the biggest problem is reminding them to take them off at the end of a session!

HSE Guidance:

HSE
Health & Safety Executive

When working with tools, equipment and materials, in practical activities and in different environments, including those that are unfamiliar, children should be taught:

- about hazards, risks and risk control;
- to recognise hazards, assess consequent risk and take steps to control the risks to themselves and others;
- to use information to assess the immediate and cumulative risks;
- to manage their environment to ensure the health and safety of themselves and others;
- to explain the steps they take to control risks



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