



# Indoor Play Risk Assessment...

## how much is enough?

**Risk Assess everything. That is the advice to indoor play providers. They must complete a proper risk assessment on almost every part of the family entertainment centre (FEC) – and do it themselves.**



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THE ADVICE continues: do it regularly, continuously and always after any kind of incident, accident or injury. A proper risk assessment is a legal requirement and since October 2006, so is a DIY fire risk assessment. Importantly, assessments must be written and kept as live and up-to-date documents available for inspection.

Each assessment is to be done by play providers or designated staff member. They may ask, "How? What does 'proper' mean? What should we write? When? How frequently? What happens if not done? What is the benefit of doing it at all?"

Fortunately, a publication now has the

answers. *'Managing Risk in Indoor Play Areas'* by Nick Balmforth and Lee Hubbucks is £25 from [www.ispal.org.uk](http://www.ispal.org.uk). It has step-by-step advice on how to undertake risk assessment.

In a 14-page example risk assessment, the headings on the first page indicate scope. They are; child security, cleaning materials and balloon gas, confined spaces and cross-contamination of pathogens from play balls. It continues with the play equipment and also includes, for example; hot liquids – drinks, basins and the kitchen sinks, hot surfaces, electrical equipment, noise (regarding hearing damage) and even cutlery is risk assessed. ■

Lesley Knight, new chair of the API, welcomed the publication as timely for a sector set to double in size in the next few years. She told *BfL*: "Child, customer and staff safety are most important. They are a critical part of best practice. As the manufacturers, we want to see indoor play providers operating safely, securely and successfully. This excellent publication now gives providers the key tool to do risk assessments properly."