

Purchasing a Highchair

What is the problem?

The problems and hazards that can arise from the use of a high chair in early childhood services are:

- the seat of the chair is too low and workers have to bend and reach too far down to use it
- the tray is not removable making it difficult to assist the child to get into and out of the chair
- the base prevents workers from sitting or standing close to the front of the chair and tray to feed the child or it presents a trip hazard
- the harness is awkward to apply and release.



What are the solutions to this problem?

Purchasing a high chair with the following design features may enable your organisation to eliminate or minimise these problems and hazards and reduce injury risks for children's services workers.

Use high chairs with a higher seat position

High chairs with higher seats can limit how far worker's need to bend and reach down when handling a child to and from the chair. Seats that are 700mm or higher are preferred.

Adjustable seats may be useful but not if they can be set lower than 700mm.

Ensure the tray can be easily removed and replaced

The front tray should be designed so it can be easily removed to expose the seat when the child is placed in and removed. The tray should lock in place when reattached to the high chair.

Select a base that provides stability but doesn't limit access

The base should be very stable to prevent tipping when the child is sitting in it. However, if possible, the area at the front of the base, under the tray, should either have no structure or only one with a very low profile to provide a clear area for workers to stand or sit in front of the child to feed them.



PURCHASING A HIGHCHAIR *continued*

Select a harness that is easy to apply and release

The harness should be easy to adjust, apply and release. It should also effectively restrain the child to prevent them from falling if the front tray has been removed.

Additional considerations

Using steps

For older children that still use a high chair for feeding, the use of a step system in front of the high chair can be considered. Workers can assist and protect these children as they move up and down these steps while not having to lift, hold and lower them.

Maintaining and cleaning

The high chair and its components should be easy to clean and require minimal or no maintenance or present any hazards to workers during cleaning or maintenance.

Consulting with employees when purchasing new equipment

The design and use of new high chairs can result in risks to employees who will work with or near this equipment. To ensure that the new high chairs you choose prevent or minimise these risks you must consult with the employees who will be using it. They will be able to give you feedback on any similar items that they have previously used or are still using so you can understand the better design features and those features that are best avoided. They should also be able to help review and provide feedback on new items being considered.

Where employees are represented by Health and Safety Representatives, they must be involved in this consultation, with or without the involvement of the employees.



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