

Purchasing Office Desks and Chairs

What is the problem?

The problems and hazards that can arise from the use of office desks and chairs in early childhood services are:

- the desk or workstation is fixed and not adjustable but is too high
- the desk or workstation is not deep enough to accommodate the computer monitor, keyboard and mouse
- the chair does not provide a sufficient range of adjustment and/or workers do not know how to adjust the seat and backrest to achieve the most comfortable position.



What are the solutions to this problem?

Purchasing office desks and chairs 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. These design features are consistent with the relevant Australian Standards for the design of these items.

Provide height adjustable workstations

Height adjustable workstations should be provided so the height of the desktop can be set to a height that best suits the comfortable seated height of the worker. A wind up mechanism that is not too close to the likely seated position of a worker so it isn't a knee strike hazard will be sufficient.

When the height adjustable workstation is installed, staff should be provided with information, instruction and training in how to set it up for maximum comfort.



Ensure that workstation is big enough

The workstation should be big enough to accommodate the monitor, keyboard and mouse and processing unit if it must be stored on the desktop.

A minimum desktop depth of 800mm is recommended for a rectangular workstation and 750mm on the larger side of a corner workstation.

PURCHASING OFFICE DESKS AND CHAIRS *continued*

Provide an adjustable chair

An adjustable chair should be provided with a 5 point base, castors and independent adjustment for:

- seat height
- seat tilt
- backrest height
- backrest forward and rearward placement.

When the adjustable chair is provided, staff should be provided with information, instruction and training in how to set it up for maximum comfort.



Maintaining and cleaning

Office desks and adjustable chairs and their 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 office desks and chairs can result in risks to employees who will work with or near this equipment. To ensure that the items of this furniture you choose prevents or minimises 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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