

## SSERC and Early Years and Primary

While it is true that the hazards involved in science and technology in Early Years and Primary are much lower than in secondary, there are two factors that mean the risks still need to be managed carefully.

Learners in this age group, especially younger ones, are likely to behave in ways that put them at greater risk than older ones: putting things in their mouths, being able to use tools safely etc.

Early Years and Primary practitioners may not have a science background and thus will need more support in understanding how to manage the risks and still carry out exciting and productive practical work. That is where SSERC comes in.

### Risk assessments

The law dictates that where activities are taking place that may be hazardous in any way then there must be a risk assessment in place. That may fill teachers with dread but it really shouldn't. The process follows a simple series of steps and SSERC can provide support all the way where needed.

Any member of staff working in a Local Authority or other member school can contact SSERC to ask for help and advice regarding STEM activities.

### Health and safety information

The most important thing you need for your risk assessment is to find out what the hazards are. Some hazards are obvious, traffic for instance, some less so. A good starting point is the ASE's excellent book *Be Safe* (which we had a hand in writing).

However, this is not a substitute for suitable risk assessments. For these, teachers in member organisations can contact SSERC and our expert staff will give up to the minute guidance on all sorts of safety-related issues.

### Interesting queries

While activities in Early Years and Primary are generally not all that hazardous, we still get some unusual requests from time to time.

#### Beekeeping



A school has a plan to install some beehives and keep bees, harvesting the honey.

Is this safe in the school grounds?

#### Exploring cow pats



A school was doing a project on choughs and wanted pupils to poke around in cow pats for grubs, like the birds do.

Is this safe?





### Professional learning

SSERC offers a range of STEM professional learning opportunities for Early Years and Primary practitioners. Our professional learning is centered around practical, hands-on activities, which are linked to the Curriculum for Excellence.

We offer face-to-face courses and online sessions, including SSERC Meets. Many of our courses feature resource kits, allowing you to try activities in the classroom or share your learning with colleagues. Supportive online materials are also provided. Most of our professional learning opportunities come at no cost to your setting or are supported by funding.

### New and exciting activities

We have numerous classroom activities to help inspire teachers in Early Years and Primary in their teaching of science and technology.

These are showcased in our twice-yearly STEM Bulletin and there is an archive of the activities on the website, organised by the CfE Experiences and outcomes.

Beyond that, if you come across a new activity, on the internet for instance, and wish to know if it is suitable or if an activity isn't working then, again, we can advise. <<



**Contact us**  
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