**Woodwork in Early Years Education - Health and Safety Checklist:**

* Safety glasses – always wear glasses. I recommend using safety glasses at all times as a matter of course – 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.
* 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.
* Initial ratios for safely introducing tools 1:3 and sawing always 1:1
* Sawing – 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. 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 being used - saw to immediately be put out of reach. Wood always clamped when being sawn.
* Woodworking is an activity that should always be monitored. Ratios can be relaxed once children are familiar with the tools with the exception of sawing which remains 1:1.
* Caution when children are using vices, clamps and pliers that fingers to not get pinched. Ensure fingers kept away from clamping area.
* Avoid hardwoods and plywood. They are too difficult for young children and there is a possibility that nails could rebound. Plywood splinters badly.
* Avoid wood treated with preservative.
* Caution with MDF. Do not cut MDF in school due to excessive levels of dust.
* Remove protruding nails from work before being taken home.
* Caution with small parts especially with younger children
* Keep floor clear – most accidents in D&T are from trips and falls.
* Be aware of children with additional needs – some children will need additional support perhaps having a 1:1 ratio at all times.
* Check for splinters. Avoid very rough splintery wood. Initially the wood can be sanded. Caution: Splinters can be a source of blood poisoning.
* Avoid nearby distractions.
* Keep tools tidy – return to original location – carry by your side.
* First aid kit available/ know location. Know who is appointed person first aid qualified.
* Ensure to pick up all fallen nails and screws (magnet!)

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 risk of impact with the eye is eliminated by wearing glasses. This can happen particularly with hard woods. Opinion has been divided on safety glasses. In many countries they are not used with hand tools and advice from PPE professionals is divided in the UK. I believe because of this small risk is unwise not to wear eye protection. 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 also 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, but 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!