

ADVENTUROUS (RISKY) PLAY POLICY

‘Being adventurous is about creating opportunities for children (and adults) to explore and test their own capacities, to manage risk and to grow as capable, resourceful and resilient children and adults.’

(National Quality Standard, Professional Learning Program, 2013).

We acknowledge that it is sometimes difficult to find the right balance between allowing children to engage in adventurous play in our physical environment whilst preventing serious injuries.

Our Service is committed to supporting families to understand the importance and benefits of risk taking through *adventurous play* for their children. We believe that for children to learn effectively and prepare for life-long skills, it’s important for them to experience challenging situations in our physical environment that is managed effectively to minimise negative outcomes, not eliminate risk.

NATIONAL QUALITY STANDARD (NQS)

QUALITY AREA 2: CHILDREN’S HEALTH AND SAFETY		
2.1.2	Health practices and procedures	Effective illness and injury management and hygiene practices are promoted and implemented.
2.1.3	Healthy Lifestyle	Healthy eating and physical activity are promoted and appropriate for each child.
2.2	Safety	Each child is protected.
2.2.1	Supervision	At all times, reasonable precautions and adequate supervision ensure children are protected from harm and hazard.
QUALITY AREA 3: PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT		
3.1.2	Upkeep	Furniture and equipment are safe, clean and well maintained.
3.2	Use	The service environment is inclusive, promotes competence and supports exploration and play-based learning.
3.2.1	Inclusive environment	Outdoor and indoor spaces are organised and adapted support every child’s participation and to engage every child in quality experiences in both built and natural environments.
3.2.2	Resources support play-based learning	Resources, materials and equipment allow for multiple uses, are sufficient in number, and enable every child to engage in play-based learning.

EDUCATION AND CARE SERVICES NATIONAL LAW AND REGULATIONS	
Sec. 167	Offence relating to protection of children from harm and hazards

73	Educational programs
86	Notification to parents of incident, injury, trauma and illness
103	Premises, furniture and equipment to be safe, clean and in good repair
104	Fencing
105	Furniture, materials and equipment
113	Outdoor space—natural environment
114	Outdoor space—shade
115	Premises designed to facilitate supervision
168	Policies and procedures are required in relation to enrolment and orientation
171	Policies and procedures to be kept available

RELATED POLICIES

Administration of First aid Policy	Physical Environment Policy
Child Safe Environment Policy	Sun Safety Policy
Health and Safety Policy	Supervision Policy
Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Policy	Work Health and Safety Policy

PURPOSE

We acknowledge the important developmental benefits of adventurous and risky play such as psychological, perceptual, physical/motor skills and social development. (Sandseter, 2010). We encourage educators to support children’s curiosity by providing them with opportunities to access risks and manage situations appropriately. We aim to support and respond to children’s physical development by offering an environment that provides open-ended, dynamic, stimulating and challenging learning opportunities for all children.

SCOPE

This policy applies to management, the approved provider, nominated supervisor, students, staff, families, visitors (including contractors) and children of the Service.

WHAT IS ADVENTUROUS PLAY?

Adventurous play, sometimes referred to as ‘risky play’ is a natural part of children’s play and can often be described as a thrilling and exciting activity, involving a risk of physical injury and play that provides

opportunities for challenge, testing limits, exploring boundaries and learning about injury risk (Sandseter (2007); Little & Wyver, 2008). Involvement in adventurous play provides children with opportunities to explore and test their own capacity, access risks and manage situations, master new skills, extend their limits and learn life skills. Research shows that success and failure of adventurous play motivates children to try again and work out different ways of doing things, increases their physical and motor skills and teaches them about their own limits. (Sandseter, 2011; Tovey, 2010).

In our endeavour to create a physical environment that is safe for all children at all times, we may be creating a physical environment that inadvertently limits adventure and risk-taking. The National Quality Standard (2.1.3) aims to encourage *“the educational leader and educators to foster physical and psychological development in children by encouraging physical activity that is challenging, extends thinking and offers opportunities to take manageable risks.”* (2018, p: 68).

IMPLEMENTATION

Our Service will continually determine whether a learning environment is dangerous or a potential learning opportunity may actually encourage risk taking.

Children are faced with risks every day. Rather than trying to eliminate all risks from children’s play, our Service will identify the possible risks and make informed decisions about whether the benefit for children’s development and learning outweighs the risks and protect children from any potential harm. We will ensure that every reasonable precaution is taken to protect children from harm and from any hazard likely to cause injury (Section 167 National Law).

In addition, educators will conduct daily safety checks to identify potential risks and hazards. According to Curtis (2010), a hazard is something that is inherently dangerous and needs to be immediately remedied. For example, a climbing structure with sharp edges, a broken fence or gate.

Educators will use positive language to support and encourage children to engage in adventurous and risky play, modify activities to ensure all experiences are inclusive and promote competence and exploration.

THE APPROVED PROVIDER/MANAGEMENT/NOMINATED SUPERVISOR/ RESPONSIBLE PERSON/EDUCATORS WILL ENSURE:

- risk assessments are conducted to identify potential hazards, assess the risks and minimise any risks that could potentially cause harm or injury to children
- to engage in critical reflection as a team and with the children about the risks and benefits of a new activity or process (see: ACECQA- [Talking about Practice: Adventurous Play. Developing a culture of risky play](#))
- daily inspection of the outdoor learning environment will be undertaken to identify any potential risk of harm to children as per our *Health and Safety Policy*
- educators employ 'active' supervision techniques at all times
- educators provide direct, constant and proximal monitoring of children undertaking activities that involve some risk and recognising when the ratio of educators to children needs to be increased (e.g.: carpentry, water activities, climbing)
- management will notify the Regulatory Authorities of any serious incident within 24 hours of the incident
- parents are notified as soon as practicable but within 24 hours if their child is involved in a serious incident/situation at the service. Details of the incident/situation are to be recorded on the *Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Record*.
- they actively encourage and acknowledge children's competence to assess risks and possible consequences (It is important to involve children in the risk assessment process, as this provides added benefits of being able to talk through hazards, learn about assessing and managing appropriate risks for themselves).
- children of all ages and abilities are provided with authentic learning experiences aimed to challenge children's capabilities, manage risk and grow as capable resourceful and resilient children (and adults)
- children are encouraged to take risks through the use of positive language, guidance and enthusiasm
- children are not pushed or forced to do something they are not sure about
- they provide a challenging and adventurous learning environment that supports children's curiosity, adventure and motivation
- children's growth mindset is respected and educators acknowledge them as competent and capable learners
- educators trust in children's abilities and judgement whilst scaffolding their learning
- children learn new skills in a safe environment through supervision and adherence to the correct educator to child ratios
- they mentor and support families' knowledge about the benefits of providing children with adventurous play experiences
- children are not denied the value of an experience because it may appear to be dangerous

- their duty of care is upheld and taken seriously
- they continue to meet their legal obligations and responsibilities as documented in the NQS and Education and Care Services National Law and Regulations.

ADVENTUROUS PLAY ENCOURAGES CHILDREN TO:

- Problem-solve
- Develop skills in negotiating (including risks)
- Build resilience, perseverance and persistence
- Extend their balance, orientation skills and coordination
- Become aware of their own capabilities and limits
- Make appropriate risk decisions
- Develop self-regulation
- Take acceptable risks
- Make decisions
- Learn about the consequences (positive and negative) of risk taking
- Gain confidence and independence
- Become creative and curious
- Learn how to use equipment safely

CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT/REFLECTION

Our *Adventurous (Risky) Play Policy* will be reviewed on an annual basis in consultation with children, families, staff, educators and management.

SOURCE

Australian Children’s Education & Care Quality Authority. (2013). *Talking about practice: Adventurous play. Developing a culture of risky play.*

Australian Government Department of Education. [Belonging, Being and Becoming: The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia.V2.0, 2022](#)

Coster, D. & Gleeve, J. (2008) *Give us a go! Children and young people’s views on play and risk-taking. Play Day.*

Curtis, D. (2010, March-April). What’s the risk of no risk? *Exchange Magazine*, 52-56.

[Education and Care Services National Regulations](#). (Amended 2023).

Greenland, P. (2010). Physical development. In T. Bruce (ed.), *Early Childhood. A guide for Students* (188-192). London: Sage.

Guide to the National Quality Framework. (2017). (Amended 2023).

Harper, N (2017). *Outdoor risky play and healthy child development in the shadow of the “risk society”: A forest and nature school perspective.*

Kids Safe (2012). Challenging Play – Risky! <https://www.kidsafensw.org/safety/playground-safety/challenging-play-risky/>

Rethinking childhood- Tim Gill. <https://rethinkingchildhood.com>

Sandseter, E. B. H. (2007). *Categorizing risky play – How can we identify risk-taking in children’s play?* European Early Child Education Research Journal, 15(2)

Sandseter, Ellen Beate Hansen. (2011). *Children’s risky play in early childhood education and care.* Childlinks. 3. [Western Australian Education and Care Services National Regulations](#)

REVIEW

POLICY REVIEWED BY:	TRACEY DAVEY	CCOMP	AUGUST 2023
POLICY REVIEWED	AUGUST 2023	NEXT REVIEW DATE	AUGUST 2024
VERSION	V5.08.23		
MODIFICATIONS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • policy maintenance - no major changes to policy • small typo fixed • continuous improvement section added • link to Western Australian Education and Care Services National Regulations added in ‘Sources’ 		
POLICY REVIEW	PREVIOUS MODIFICATIONS	NEXT REVIEW DATE	
AUGUST 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • policy maintenance - no major changes to policy • minor formatting edits within text to improve flow of wording • hyperlinks checked and repaired as required 	AUGUST 2023	
AUGUST 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Title changed to Adventurous (Risky) Play • minor edits to formatting • sources checked for currency 	AUGUST 2022	
AUGUST 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction modified- section added What is Adventurous Play • Related regulations added • Additional related policies added • Additional information added re: supervision, safety checks • Minor edits and rearrangement of some points 	AUGUST 2021	
AUGUST 2019	New policy developed		AUGUST 2020