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### Early Childhood Australia - *Everyday Learning Series*



There are as we know many barriers for young children in Australia (in cities particularly) to access quality outdoor play environments – placing more pressure on early years centres and schools to fill the gap.

In 2019 Play Australia member and Senior Lecturer of Early Childhood Education at Macquarie University in New South Wales, Dr Helen Little wrote two publications for [Early Childhood Australia's \*Everyday Learning Series\*](#). These are valuable reading resources for early years educators and parents alike.



***Active outdoor play (Volume 17 Number 2)*** is a succinct coverage of the benefits of outdoor play for children, the role both the environment and adult carers have in supporting physically active play and links through to the National Quality Standard and Children's Services Competencies.

*Dr Little states that "Environmental factors – such as space, playground design, access to natural environments and availability of quality equipment and resources – influence children's levels of physical activity and opportunities for challenging, physical play."*

There are reflective practice questions for educators throughout, suggestions for how to find nature and nature experiences in city environments, a table listing the different 'affordances' of elements for use in physical play, and a case study about a 'Bush Kindergarten' to provide a 'real life' example of theory in practice.

***Risky play and the outdoors (Volume 17 Number 3)*** acts as a follow up to *Active outdoor play*, building on the ground set by the previous issue. Again it defines and expounds on risky play and its importance to children's learning and development, and discusses both management of and suitable settings for risky play outdoors.

*"Rather than just deciding something isn't safe, the benefits for children's learning and development need to be considered, as do the potential risks. A risk-benefit approach requires educators to challenge their concepts of acceptable risk and identify why spaces and activities might be too controlling. It also requires thinking about risk management in terms of being 'hazard-aware' rather than 'risk-averse' ." says Dr Little*

Links through to the National Quality Standard and Children's Services Competencies are again provided.

There are reflective practice questions for educators and a table listing the different types of risky play (from play involving *heights* and *speed*, to *vicarious risky play* (where participation occurs through watching others). Most importantly there is suggested language to use with children around risky play and a further 'real-life' observed case study scenario involving children's interactions during risky play for modelling.

The content in these publications is embedded in current local and international academic research, the language however is both accessible and practical making them easy guides for review and use in an early years setting.

**Both publications are available for purchase individually or via subscription from Early Childhood Australia (ECA), as either a print or e-book. They retail for \$16.00 + taxes and handling each.**

<http://www.earlychildhoodaustralia.org.au/shop/everyday-learning-series>