



Play Today *campaign*

Play balances risk-taking & safety

Why?

Children will seek the opportunity to try something new or challenging, which is a natural part of 'self-learning'. By mastering small challenges in play children build self-confidence and resilience. Adults can provide support when needed for children to challenge themselves and learn to make independent judgements. Standards exist to prevent hazards in playgrounds seriously injuring children.

CLIMB TREES



64% of adults said they climbed trees as children, compared to less than 20% of their children

RISK LEVEL



Playground risk is extremely low in terms of fatalities, and in terms of lesser injuries far lower than for traditional sports and about the same as the risk encountered at home

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Challenges we face

- Growing anxiety around perceptions of children's safety can often limit children's experiences of play outdoors
- Children who don't develop risk competency in childhood often have difficulty with confidence, decision-making and problem solving later on
- Many demands on adults attention means that children are not always adequately supervised in public playgrounds and there is an assumption that children's safety is someone else's responsibility



What You Can Do

THREE YEARS & UNDER

- Direct very young children towards play activities suitable to their age and competency level and spend time supervising them. Remember your mobile can wait!
- Respond appropriately to situations – remember children watch your cues. Tumbles and bumps are a normal part of childhood learning

FOUR YEARS & OVER

- Encourage children to try and challenge themselves when playing outdoors
- Wait to be invited in – supervision means watching and responding when needed, not directing play
- Talk to children about potential risks and discuss suitable ways they can manage these. Get them to suggest ideas!
- Respond appropriately to situations – remember children watch your cues. Tumbles and bumps are a normal part of childhood learning
- Don't pad or place helmets on children for play. It is important that a child's whole body is free to practise different skills in play

Definition of Risk

Risk applies to any situation where the outcome is unknown. It is commonly used to apply to a negative situation outcome, but when applied to the play behaviour of children or to the design of playgrounds, there are positive implications to risky situations and risk-taking behaviour.

Definition of Risk Competency

Risk competency refers to a child's capacity to make suitable judgements around managing risky situations for a beneficial outcome.



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