WHY OUTDOOR RISKY PLAY MATTERS...AND WHAT YOU CAN DO TO SUPPORT IT!

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WHAT'S SO SPECIAL ABOUT OUTDOOR PLAY?

• Autonomy
• Self-determination
• Emotional and behavioural regulation – self and peer
• Physical literacy
• Prosocial skills
• Joyfulness
• Coping with uncertainty and change

SOCIAL PLAY

Social connection is linked to wellbeing and mental health!

Social bonds are forged during play with both peers and adults.

BENEFITS OF OUTDOOR RISKY PLAY

• Clear benefits for physical literacy
• Clear benefits for improving moderate-vigorous physical activity levels
• Emerging evidence of increased co-operative and collaborative behaviour
• Qualitative research evidence of improvements in emotional regulation

Risk!

Risk looks different for each child.

Risk aversion is common!

Often we focus on immediate, unlikely risks rather than deferred more likely risks

The goal is not to eliminate risk – rather, assess for risks and benefits.

Holistic approach to risk

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

Reflect on your school or setting.

Think: how can you nurture the possibilities of playtime for your children?

Choose 2 or 3 of the 7 Cs and reflect on changes you can make to improve child experiences of outdoor play in your setting.

The 7 Cs

Brussoni & Herrington, 2015

Character – overall feel of outdoor play spaces

Context – how the play space interacts with its surroundings

Connectivity – the physical and visual connectedness of the play space

Change – range of differently sized spaces designed in the play area and how these spaces change over time

Challenge – the opportunity for children to create, manipulate, and leave an impression on their outdoor play space

Clarity – integrates physical and perceptual legibility...play spaces should create enough mystery to promote spontaneous exploration but not confusion that will detract children from investigating the play space

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