



## OUTDOOR RISKY PLAY

### Strategies & Ideas

*Jodie Clarke*  
The Empowered Educator



# Risky Play

What are the benefits?



**"Children and young people need to encounter some real risks if they are to respond positively to challenging situations and learn how to deal with uncertainty. "**

from 'Managing Risk in Play Provision', by Ball,  
Gill and Spiegel

- Allows for independent thinking, decisions & self regulation.
- Explore positive & negative consequences.
- Develops urge to explore and understand.
- Teaches how to use equipment safely.
- Social skills as children share risk & strategy.
- Helps develop self confidence, creativity.



- How to manage failure, frustration, setbacks and persevere.
- Challenges coordination & balance skills.
- Less boredom leads to less risky behaviour choices and actions.
- Children can challenge their limits, extend new skills, learn through trial & error.





“This cannot be achieved by limiting them to supposedly safe environments. Therefore, providers of play opportunities have no choice but to offer situations in which children and young people can experience real, not make-believe, hazards”

‘Managing Risk in Play Provision’, by Ball, Gill and Spiegel

# Risk & Challenge

What might it look like in the outdoor environment?





- Spaces for secrecy, planning, privacy.
- Steps, levels, natural materials, obstacles.
- Extending on children's curiosity & questions.
- Educators show confidence in choices & skills.



- Access to loose parts & open ended materials.
- Opportunities to use real tools & skills.
- Children working together to persist & try.





# A BALANCED APPROACH

Safe risk taking balanced with protection.

*Think carefully before eliminating all risks*

# Manage Risk

Tips to put a plan in place.





- Considers the risk as well as the benefits to children - does risk outweigh benefit?
- Understands children need and want to take risks when they play outdoors.
- Must be based on clear values and understanding among all educators.

- Extra training & support for anxious teachers.
- Assess environment - identify hazards, decide what needs modification.
- Employ common sense & extend child capabilities.
- Clear guidelines & communication with new & regular families.



- Considers gender, ages, stages, special needs.
- Be aware of a 'one size fits all' environment.
- What identified hazards add clear potential for learning benefits that outweigh potential for harm?
- Involve children in making decisions regarding acceptable risks.





- Must be a clear policy in place first.
- Parents fears must be addressed in regard to the environment and risky play opportunities offered .
- Distinguish between acceptable & unacceptable risk. Discuss together.





# Empowered Educator Mini-Guide

I hope you have found this Empowered Educator Resource helpful!

## Looking for more help?

Find activity plans, play based learning ideas, E-courses, E-Books, Toolkits for Educators (covering the topics you request the most!), printables, templates and more in The Empowered Ed Resource Shop.

SHOW  
ME



*The Empowered Educator*  
Inspiring ideas and resources for early learning