



Adventurous Play

Approval: March 2022

Review: March 2024

POLICY STATEMENT:

'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).

At Bondi Before & After School Care, we acknowledge the growth of risk aversion in child care centres and the potential this has to negatively impact on children's ability to problem solve and respond positively to challenging situations (Ball, Gill & Spiegel, 2003). We are also aware that in today's society children's contact with the outdoors is becoming more and more limited as the dependence on electronic and digital sources for learning, recreation and socialising increases. We believe that it is necessary to provide children with environments where they can experience real hazards and learn to respond to these, supported by educators.

At BASC educators will encourage children to take certain risks such as tree climbing, bug watching, walking with bare feet and playing with sticks however only after identifying potential dangers and how to avoid them. Research suggests that "when children make choices, accept challenges, take considered risks, manage change and cope with frustration" they gain strong social and emotional wellbeing (My Time Our Place, 2011). As a centre we strive to assist children in achieving the My Time Our Place framework outcomes and so believe that children should regularly participate in challenging activities and risk assessing.

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.
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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 REGULATIONS

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

PURPOSE

At BASC we aim to:

- acknowledge the important developmental benefits of adventurous and risky play such as psychological, perceptual, physical/motor skills and social development. (Sandseter, 2010).
- encourage educators to support children's curiosity by providing them with opportunities to access risks and manage situations appropriately.
- 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.
- keep children safe by supporting them to form risk assessments of challenging and potentially risky activities.
- take every reasonable precaution to protect children from harm and any hazard likely to cause injury
- provide outdoor experiences that engage children and encourage them to become responsible in and show respect for the outdoor environment

SCOPE

This policy applies to children, families, staff, management and visitors 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).

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

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.

STRATEGIES:

Management: The Approved Provider, Nominated Supervisor, Responsible Person will ensure:

- That all staff are aware of this policy as well as the “*Creating a child safe environment*” policy
- Inspection of the outdoor learning environments are conducted daily before each BSC, ASC and VAC session to identify any potential risk of harm to children.
- Any hazards identified in outdoor environments are reported to the Director, WHS officer and the school GA for action and all hazards & safety measures are communicated to educators.

- Risk assessments of environments and activities are conducted to identify potential hazards, assess the risks and minimise any risks that could potentially cause harm or injury to children
- All staff are aware of specific boundaries relating to Adventurous play including tree climbing, insect, stick, rock and bare foot play
- Sufficient numbers of staff are employed to ensure adequate supervision of children at all times
- Continue to meet legal obligations and responsibilities as documented in the NQS and Education and Care Services National Law and Regulations.
- All staff are aware of:
 - the need for adequate supervision of children at all times
 - their responsibility to report any incidents of harm to children
- In the case of any serious incident management will:
 - notify the Regulatory Authorities within 24 hours of the incident
 - notify parents 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.

Educators, staff and volunteers will:

- Ensure their duty of care is upheld and taken seriously
- Undertake daily inspection of the outdoor learning environment to identify any potential risk of harm to children.
- Report any hazards in the outdoor environment to the WHS officer, Director and the school GA.
- Immediately eliminate or isolate any potential hazards.
- Employ 'active' supervision techniques, ensuring adequate supervision of children at all times.
- 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)
- Clearly identify risks in outdoor environments with children.
- 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).
- Assist children in coming up with ways to avoid risk, ensure suggestions are documented
- Communicate clear boundaries to children relating to tree climbing height, areas appropriate for bare feet, the size of sticks to play with and the types of bugs they can study as well as how long for
- Engage in critical reflection as a team and with the children about the risks and benefits of a new activity or process
- Provide a challenging and adventurous learning environment that supports children's curiosity, adventure and motivation
- Provide children with tools to interact with the outdoor environment in imaginative and exploratory ways
- Encourage children to appreciate and respect the natural elements of the outdoor environment including trees, plants and animals
- Prompt children to think about appropriate ways to interact with nature by asking questions
- Respect children's growth mindset, acknowledging them as competent and capable learners
- Trust in children's abilities and judgement whilst scaffolding their learning
- Mentor and support families' knowledge about the benefits of providing children with adventurous play experiences
- Educators will also ensure 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)
 - are encouraged to take risks through the use of positive language, guidance and enthusiasm
 - are not pushed or forced to do something they are not sure about
 - learn new skills in a safe environment through supervision and adherence to the correct educator to child ratios

Source

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POLICY REVIEWED	MODIFICATIONS	NEXT REVIEW DATE
August 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Parent Committee No Changes 	August 2022
February 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Change title to Adventurous Play Policy ● Adopted content and language from Child Care Centre Desktop Adventurous Play Polily ● Reformatted to add Regulations and Quality Areas ● Additional sources added ● Additional Related Policy & documents added ● Added Policy Reviewed table 	March 2022

CONSIDERATIONS

Education & Care Services National Regulations	regulation 113
National Quality Standard	Quality Area's 2 & 3
Service Policies & Documentation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Supervision ● Child Safe Environment ● Parent Handbook
Other	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010 ● My Time Our Place Framework 2011 ● National Quality Framework 2012 ● Ombudsman Act 1974
Sources	<p>Ball, D., Gill, T., & Spiegel, B. (2003). Managing Risk in Play Provision: Implementation Guide. England: Play Safety Forum.</p> <p>Community Childcare Cooperative (2012)</p> <p>Government of South Australia - Department for Education and Child Development (2014), Out of School Hours Care: Balancing Risks and Benefits in Children's Play Experiences, accessed from http://www.decd.sa.gov.au/oshc/pages/default/play/?reFlag=1</p> <p>Somers Preschool (2013), Play Benefit and Risk Policy, accessed from http://somerspreshool.org.au/Bush_Kinder_files/somers_bush_kinder_policy-play_benefit_and_risk-17.02.13.pdf</p>