

# ADVENTUROUS (RISKY AND NATURE) PLAY POLICY

*‘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).

*Outdoor spaces invite open-ended play and interactions, physically active play and games, spontaneity, risk-taking, exploration, discovery and connection with nature. They foster an appreciation of the natural world and the interdependence between people, animals, plants, lands and waters providing opportunities for children to engage with all concepts of sustainability through environmental education.*

(Early Years Learning Framework, V2.0, p.23).

We acknowledge that it is sometimes difficult to find the right balance between allowing children to engage in adventurous play in our physical environment indoors and outdoors, 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.

Our natural local environments assist children to gain an understanding of nature and gain a respect for the living and non-living environments within their world. By more involvement and play within the Australian bush, children can create and be inspired by nature and the natural resources it provides. Children are also able to gain a better understanding of our First Nations people, the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders who are connected to the land, water, plants, animals, mother earth and father sky within the natural bushland of Australia.

## NATIONAL QUALITY STANDARD (NQS)

| QUALITY AREA 1: EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM AND PRACTICE |                             |                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
|--------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1.1.1                                            | Approved Learning Framework | Curriculum decision-making contributes to each child’s learning and development outcomes in relation to their identity, connection with community, wellbeing, confidence as learners and effectiveness as communicators |

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| 1.2.1                                                                     | Intentional Teaching                  | Educators are deliberate, purposeful, and thoughtful in their decisions and actions                                                                                              |
| 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.                                                                                                                     |
| 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.                                   |
| QUALITY AREA 6: COLLABORATIVE PARTENERSHIPS WITH FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES |                                       |                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| 6.2                                                                       | Collaborative partnerships            | Collaborative partnerships enhance children's inclusion, learning and wellbeing                                                                                                  |
| 6.2.3                                                                     | Community engagement                  | The service builds relationships and engages with its community                                                                                                                  |

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| EDUCATION AND CARE SERVICES NATIONAL LAW AND REGULATIONS |                                                                  |
| Sec. 167                                                 | Offence relating to protection of children from harm and hazards |
| Sec. 51                                                  | Approved number of places must not be exceeded                   |
| 73                                                       | Educational program                                              |

|     |                                                                               |
|-----|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 78  | Food and beverages                                                            |
| 85  | Incident, injury, trauma and illness policies and procedures                  |
| 86  | Notification to parents of incident, injury, trauma and illness               |
| 97  | Emergency and evacuation procedures                                           |
| 101 | Conduct of risks assessment for excursion                                     |
| 102 | Authorisations for excursions                                                 |
| 103 | Premises, furniture and equipment to be safe, clean and in good repair        |
| 104 | Fencing                                                                       |
| 105 | Furniture, materials and equipment                                            |
| 109 | Toilet and hygiene facilities                                                 |
| 113 | Outdoor space—natural environment                                             |
| 114 | Outdoor space—shade                                                           |
| 115 | Premises designed to facilitate supervision                                   |
| 136 | First Aid qualifications                                                      |
| 155 | Interactions with children                                                    |
| 156 | Relationships in groups                                                       |
| 158 | Children's attendance record to be kept by approved provider                  |
| 165 | Record of visitors                                                            |
| 167 | Record of services compliance                                                 |
| 168 | Policies and procedures are required in relation to enrolment and orientation |
| 169 | Additional policies and procedures-family day care service                    |
| 171 | Policies and procedures to be kept available                                  |

## RELATED POLICIES

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| Administration of First aid Policy<br>Acceptance and Refusal of Authorisation Policy<br>Child Protection Policy<br>Child Safe Environment Policy | Medical Conditions Policy<br>Nutrition and Food Safety Policy<br>Physical Environment Policy<br>Safe Transportation Policy |
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| Delivery of Children to and Collection from<br>Education and Care Services Premises Policy<br>Emergency Evacuation Policy<br>Health and Safety Policy<br>Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Policy<br>Excursion/Incursion Policy<br>Interactions with Children, Families and Staff<br>Policy | Sleep and Rest Policy<br>Snake Awareness Policy<br>Sun Safety Policy<br>Supervision Policy<br>Water Safety Policy<br>Work Health and Safety Policy |
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## PURPOSE

We acknowledge the important developmental benefits of adventurous and risky play such as psychological, perceptual, physical/motor skills and social development. (Sandseter, 2010). We encourage educators to support children’s curiosity by providing them with opportunities to access risks and manage situations appropriately. We aim to 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. We recognise the importance of investigating, researching and being involved within the natural environment of our surrounding bushland in Australia and learning and using natural resources found within our local environment for play and sustainable living. By encouraging children to understand our natural resources and environment they are building an understanding of the First Nations People within Australia and learning ways of being more sustainable for our world.

## SCOPE

This policy applies to management, the approved provider, nominated supervisor, students, staff, families, visitors and children 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 always safe for all children, 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).

### IMPLEMENTATION

Our Service will continually determine whether a learning environment is dangerous, or a potential learning opportunity may 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.

### THE APPROVED PROVIDER/MANAGEMENT/NOMINATED SUPERVISOR/ RESPONSIBLE PERSON/EDUCATORS WILL ENSURE:

- risk assessments are conducted to identify potential hazards, assess the risks and minimise any risks that could potentially cause harm or injury to children
- *an Excursion Risk Assessment Management Plan or Regular Outing- Risk Assessment Management Plan* for Bush Kinder/ Forest Play is conducted to identify potential hazards, assess the risks and minimise any risks that could potentially cause harm or injury to children
- a thorough risk assessment is conducted prior to a Bush Kinder/ Forest Play session, the Risk Assessment is to be approved by the Approved Provider

- the *First Aid Policy* and procedures are always followed while children are attending the Bush Kinder/ Forest Play
- to engage in critical reflection as a team and with the children about the risks and benefits of a new activity or process (see: ACECQA- [Talking about Practice: Adventurous Play. Developing a culture of risky play](#))
- a daily inspection of the outdoor learning environment is undertaken to identify any potential risk of harm to children as per our *Health and Safety Policy*
- educators always employ 'active' supervision techniques
- educators 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)
- management will notify the Regulatory Authorities of any serious incident within 24 hours of the incident
- parents are notified 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*.
- they 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).
- 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)
- children are encouraged to take risks using positive language, guidance and enthusiasm
- children are not pushed or forced to do something they are not sure about
- they provide a challenging and adventurous learning environment that supports children's curiosity, adventure and motivation
- children's growth mindset is respected and educators acknowledge them as competent and capable learners
- educators trust in children's abilities and judgement whilst scaffolding their learning
- children learn new skills in a safe environment through supervision and adherence to the correct educator to child ratios

- they mentor and support families' knowledge about the benefits of providing children with adventurous play experiences
- children are not denied the value of an experience because it may appear to be dangerous
- their duty of care is upheld and taken seriously
- they continue to meet their legal obligations and responsibilities as documented in the NQS and Education and Care Services National Law and Regulations.

#### 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

#### WHAT IS FOREST PLAY?

Our Service provides children the opportunity to regularly participate in an in-nature program as a part of their enrolment. Children have the opportunity to explore and engage with the natural world, fostering a connection to the environment and an appreciation for nature. An in-nature pedagogy incorporates time spent by children and educators outside the approved children's education and care service premises with a focus on nature. (ACECQA, NQF Review (2019)).

The purpose of the Forest Play should be clearly identified by providing information on how the Forest Play supports the educational program and contributes to the outcomes for children. Our Service will conduct a risk assessment prior to Forest Play with consideration given to:

- dog awareness with children and educators
- danger of snake and suitable bandages in first aid kit
- guidance to children about stranger danger
- what emergencies may occur and what we need to be prepared for
- medication needs and possible illnesses
- authorisations for all children prior to participation in the program
- sun safety clothing and sunscreen
- water safety (if applicable)
- weather conditions
- travel and possible unexpected delay
- ratios maintained in both service and excursion
- supervision appropriate for children's developmental needs
- Child safe principles
- procedures and policies relating to excursions and transportation to be followed before children attend Bush Kinder or Forest school, including authorisations

### ITEMS TO BE TAKEN ON BUSH KINDER/ FOREST PLAY

The approved provider/ nominated supervisor must ensure that the following items are taken during participation of Bush Kinder/ Forest Play, as per the risk assessment:

- appropriate number of suitably equipped first aid kits
- fully charged and operating mobile phone
- emergency contact information details for all children participating
- medication for children requiring medical and relevant medical management plans
- items required for Bush Kinder/ Forest Play - such as sunscreen, hats, change of clothes, other equipment, wet weather gear
- child's attendance record
- food and water as required
- nappy change equipment if required

### FOREST SCHOOL PLAY ENCOURAGES CHILDREN TO:

- use natural items for sustainability
- develop skills in natural local environments
- build a respect and understanding of local customs and traditions

- build knowledge of Australian and Torres Strait Islander People
- develop an understanding of First Nations connection to land, water, plants, animals, Mother Earth and Father Sky
- develop a personal connection and understanding with nature
- help to make future appropriate decisions for our world
- develop a sense of wellbeing, inner strength and confidence from nature

## CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT/REFLECTION

Our *Adventurous (Risky and Nature) Play Policy* will be reviewed on an annual basis in consultation with children, families, staff, educators and management.

## SOURCES

Australian Children's Education & Care Quality Authority. (2013). *Talking about practice: Adventurous play. Developing a culture of risky play*

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## REVIEW

|                     |                 |                  |            |
|---------------------|-----------------|------------------|------------|
| POLICY REVIEWED BY: | Belinda Wethers | Principal        | 16/04/2024 |
| POLICY REVIEWED     | APRIL 2024      | NEXT REVIEW DATE | MAY 2025   |

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| VERSION       | V5.08.23                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |                  |
| MODIFICATIONS | <p><b>NOVEMBER 2023</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Additional information relating to Bush Kinder/Forest Play added to policy</li> <li>Policy title change to Adventurous (Risky and Nature) Play Policy</li> </ul> <p><b>AUGUST 2023</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>policy maintenance - no major changes to policy</li> <li>small typo fixed</li> <li>continuous improvement section added</li> <li>link to Western Australian Education and Care Services National Regulations added in 'Sources'</li> </ul> |                  |
| POLICY REVIEW | PREVIOUS MODIFICATIONS                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | NEXT REVIEW DATE |
| AUGUST 2022   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>policy maintenance - no major changes to policy</li> <li>minor formatting edits within text to improve flow of wording</li> <li>hyperlinks checked and repaired as required</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | AUGUST 2023      |
| AUGUST 2021   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Title changed to Adventurous (Risky) Play</li> <li>minor edits to formatting</li> <li>sources checked for currency</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | AUGUST 2022      |
| AUGUST 2020   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Introduction modified- section added What is Adventurous Play</li> <li>Related regulations added</li> <li>Additional related policies added</li> <li>Additional information added re: supervision, safety checks</li> <li>Minor edits and rearrangement of some points</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | AUGUST 2021      |
| AUGUST 2019   | New policy developed                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | AUGUST 2020      |