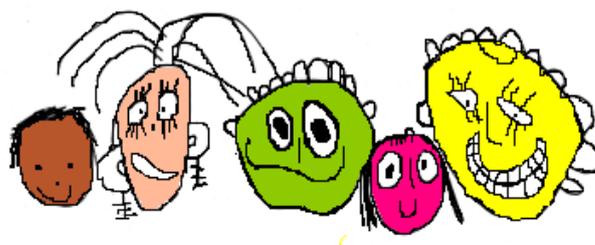


Hamilton Community Pre-School

"Where discoveries, learning and fun connect."



Information Sheets for Parents

Risky Play

What is risky play?

Risky play can be defined as a thrilling and exciting activity that involves a risk of physical injury, and play that provides opportunities for challenge, testing limits, exploring boundaries and learning about injury risk.

Risk and challenging play in practice

At Hamilton Community Preschool we implement learning opportunities such as;

- Loose parts play – providing children with items such as plastic pipes, milk crates, large reels, ropes, pulleys, wooden boxes, sticks, logs etc.
- Fire pits where children cook damper under the supervision of our educators and learn about the value of fire and the respect of its power must always be remembered
- Allowing children opportunity to climb, jump and challenge their unique individual physical skills
- Using climbing apparatus in non-traditional ways such as going up the slide not down
- Beach excursions where children and educators explore the wonderful resources nature provides
- Supporting children to problem solve and make decisions
- Excursions catching public transport.

Note: All of these activities are undertaken with the correct supervision of our educators.

The benefits of risky play

The National Quality Standards and Early Years Learning Framework endorse the benefits of risky play for children. In an article written by Dr Anne Kennedy in their magazine Putting Children First Issue 31, published in September 2009 the NCAC, discussed this at length.

"The benefits for children from these requirements are reduced if child care professionals use them to limit what they provide in the way of interesting and challenging environments and experiences. The 'cotton wool' approach can result in over-restrictive limitations on children's right to play, experiment, explore, and to extend themselves within a stimulating, yet safe environment."

The Tasmanian Catholic Education Commission in a final draft paper entitled Managing Risk in Play Provision (January 2013) states; *"Risk-taking is an essential part of children's play. Managing that risk is the key to providing opportunities that support growth and development and keep children safe from unreasonable risk and injury. The balancing of these two is vital for our children's health and development.* (Allen and Rapee, 2005 cited in Sanseter, E. and Kennair, L. 2011)

Everyday life is full of risks and challenges and children need opportunities to develop the skills associated with managing risk and making informed judgements about risks from a very young age.

Learnt Life-Skills

Risky play helps to develop important life skill learnings such as;

- Building resilience and persistence
- Balance and coordination
- Awareness of the capabilities and limits of their own bodies
- The ability to assess and make judgement about risk
- Handling tools safely and with purpose
- Understanding consequence to action
- Confidence and independence
- Resourcefulness
- Creativity and inventiveness
- Curiosity and wonder
- Problem solving



Each child is unique and so the level of risk and challenge they seek will also vary, yet most children will actively seek risk and challenge in play as they explore the world around them and their own physical abilities.

Life is full of risk. By providing children with opportunities to participate in risky and challenging play in a safe learning environment, we provide opportunity for the development of important life skill learnings such as making choices, problem solving, measured risk taking, and navigating their way socially and emotionally in group situations. These skills will be important right through life – particularly in vulnerable stages such as their teenage years, so let's send them out prepared.