

Policies and Procedures



Amendment

Addition:

Policy 5b Risky Play 2025

1st Step Pre-school Ltd

5a. Risky Play

STATEMENT

Risky play is an invaluable part of childhood. Research shows that not only does it increase children's physical and motor skills but also teaches them about their own limits, and how to deal with risks in the future. It is important that we provide children with an environment where they can engage in risky play that is as safe as necessary rather than as safe as possible. We want our children to grow into independent, resilient adults. With care, we can raise children who will actually be safer, more self-aware, and more confident as they face any number of challenges in life. The more children are free to engage in risky play the better they will be at managing risks, judging what they are capable of, and keeping themselves safe. The role of the practitioner is to provide a challenging and risky learning environment that will support all children as they become more motivated, curious, able, and adventurous.

Aim:

The aim of this policy is to make sure children are given access to risky play to extend their learning and development whilst being supported by capable and confident adults.

Objectives:

- For children to explore and extend their development through taking risks in a controlled environment.
- For staff to supervise children to ensure they are able to access risky play whilst staying safe.
- For children to become confident in taking risks and developing their skills and independence.

Guidelines for Implementation:

- At 1st Step Pre-school Ltd we recognise that taking risks forms a vital part of building children's learning and development.
- We will encourage children to take risks and challenge themselves in the safety of the nursery environment.
- To ensure children can learn skills in a safe environment staff will always adhere to ratios. These ratios ensure that children can always be properly supervised. Staff are always alert and aware to the children's needs and will support them as much as they can.

Types of risky play that the children may be involved in includes:

Climbing: Children love to climb things! We have a new open ended climbing area. There are all sorts of ways for children to create their own climbing experiences with logs, crates and planks. These projects are excellent for problem solving and communication. They also get children excited about a group activity and helping each other try it out. They also develop so much coordination and balancing skills. Hills or slopes are a great element to climb, particularly if there is the risk of tumbling down, riding bikes and scooters around.

Dangerous tools: We use cutters and knives to chop up fruit and vegetables. Staff ratios are always in place, and the children are talked through simple rules, and just made sure they are focussed when using them and not distracted. Tools are brilliant for fine motor skills, providing real life experiences which are more inviting for the children, which in turn, makes them more focused and motivated to learn.

Water: Once again, supervision and risk assessment are very important. However, once again the benefit of being near water is its dangerous nature and how it should be respected.

Roles and Responsibilities: It is the role and responsibility of all members of staff to ensure they are aware of any risks in the nursery and that they position themselves with the children so that they are able to help, support and encourage as and when needed. It is the responsibility of the Lead Practitioners to ensure staffing ratios are always adhered to within the nursery.

Dynamic risk assessments have been completed as part of our ongoing planning process. These assessments enabled us to respond to changing circumstances and identify any new or emerging risks. In addition, daily checklists are carried out to ensure consistent monitoring of safety measures and to promptly address any issues that may arise. Appropriate actions have been taken to reduce risks, ensuring the safety and wellbeing of everyone involved. This supports the smooth and safe delivery of planned activities.

RESIDUAL RISK RATING	ACTION REQUIRED
VERY HIGH (VH) Strong likelihood of fatality / serious injury occurring	The activity must not take place at all. You must identify further controls to reduce the risk rating.
HIGH (H) Possibility of fatality/serious injury occurring	You must identify further controls to reduce the risk rating. Seek further advice, e.g. from your H&S Team
MEDIUM (M) Possibility of significant injury or over 3 day absence occurring	If it is not possible to lower risk further, you will need to consider the risk against the benefit. Monitor risk assessments at this rating more regularly and closely.
LOW (L) Possibility of minor injury only	No further action required.