

Risky Play Policy



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 known 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 educator 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 Once Upon A Time Daycare 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. In some cases based on the individual risky play activities ratio's may be higher to ensure sufficient supervision is provided. Please see individual risk assessments for this information.
- Types of risky play that the children may be involved in includes:
 - Climbing: We have a open ended climbing resources. There are all sorts of ways for children to create their own climbing experiences with logs, crates, tyres 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.
 - Experiencing speed: Bikes and scooters in their various forms provide this element of speed for risky play. There is the danger of falling off or crashing. Bikes are excellent for developing strength in the legs, and also coordination for going around obstacles.
 - Dangerous tools: We use cutters and knives to chop up fruit and vegetables. Scissors are also a dangerous tool which require adult supervision. Staff ratios are always in place and are sometimes higher, 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.

Small items: We have sequins, beads, googly eyes, pom poms etc. These items are small and are at risk of being put in mouths and noses therefore the ratio is again higher based on the risk assessments. These are classed as red dot activities and will be kept in a clear cylinder pot accessible only when an adult supervising is in place. These items are amazing when contributing to fine motor skills, expressive arts and design, counting, identifying colour, texture, communication and language and so much more therefore ensuring they can explore these safely with a supervising adult is crucial to children's learning and development.

Risky elements:

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 Management to ensure staffing ratios are always adhered to within the nursery. Links to other policies, procedures & guidance:

- Health and safety policy

This policy was adopted on	Signed on behalf of the nursery	Date for review
28/06/2025	Rebecca Street	28/06/2026
28/06/2026	Rebecca Street	28/06/2027