

## What is risky play?

Risky play and risk-taking is a natural part of all children's play at StartBright. Children actively seek a thrilling and an exciting environment that provides opportunities for challenge, testing limits, exploring boundaries and learning about injury risk.

## Why is risky play so important?

Young children need to be kept safe from potential hazard at all times however, children need to explore and experience risks to enhance their overall development.

- **Physical development-** running, jumping, skipping, climbing and balancing. All these actions involve an element of risk, which allow children to develop critical skills.
- **Emotional development-** risky play helps children to overcome fears, test abilities, develop self-confidence and become resilient learners.
- **Mental development-** children feel in control of their actions. They are aware of their surroundings and boundaries.



## The value and importance of risky play for young children

"A degree of risk – properly managed – is not only inevitable, but positively desirable"



**StartBright**

Early Learning for Our Community



## The types of risky play experiences children engage in at StartBright-

- Climbing and swinging from trees.
- Rolling and tumbling down steep hills.
- Playing with tools such as drills and hammers in the outdoor construction pit.
- Exploring water and puddles.
- Balancing on planks of wood.
- Constructing a den with natural materials e.g. wood, ropes and stones.

## How educators manage risky play-

It is important to understand that no environment or space is 'risk-free'. Educators support and encourage children to gain confidence and explore their surroundings. Educators recognise that each child is unique and differs in the level of satisfaction gained from risky play. Educators ensure and implement the following-

- Complete risk assessment of outdoor environment on a daily basis.
- Ensure health and safety procedures and policies are being followed e.g. crashmats under climbing equipment.
- Ensure all children are safe and protected in all weathers e.g. raingear.
- Ensure equipment is safe and age and stage appropriate.
- Children are supervised and guided through risky play experiences at all times.

## Benefits of risky play for young children-

- **Encourages social interaction-** children often play together when risk is involved and gain great satisfaction from experimenting as a team.
- **Children understand and connection with the environment-** through exploring risky terrain children experience thrilling effects e.g. how to make mud muddier.
- **Develop motor skills-** children strengthen their upper bodies and limbs by climbing, using tools and running. Children improve coordination by balancing and building with objects.
- **Nurtures children's curiosity-** children are given a wide scope to explore their interests while developing their self-confidence and esteem.
- **Form positive attitudes-** risky play allows children to generate a positive inner voice as there is no 'right' or 'wrong' answer associated with risky play.



