

# 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.

Medowie Gumnut Preschool 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
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		
3.2	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.

EDUCATION AND CARE SERVICES NATIONAL LAW AND NATIONAL REGULATIONS	
S. 167	Offence relating to protection of children from harm and hazards
73	Educational program
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
168	Policies and procedures are required in relation to enrolment and orientation
171	Policies and procedures to be kept available

## PURPOSE

At Medowie Gumnut Preschool, 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 children, families, staff, educators, management, approved provider, nominated supervisor, students, volunteers and visitors of Medowie Gumnut Preschool.

## 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 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 collaborate and take considered and appropriate risks.” (2024, p: 168).

## IMPLEMENTATION

Medowie Gumnut Preschool will continually determine whether a learning environment is dangerous, or a potential learning opportunity that may encourage risk taking.

Children are faced with risks every day. Rather than trying to eliminate all risks from children’s play, Medowie Gumnut Preschool 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 (S. 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/ WILL ENSURE:

- that obligations under the Education and Care Services National Law and National Regulations are met
  - all educators, staff, students, visitors and volunteers they have knowledge of and adhere to this policy
  - 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* is conducted to identify potential hazards, assess the risks and minimise any risks that could potentially cause harm or injury to children
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- to engage in critical reflection as a team and with the children about the risks and benefits of a new activity or process

- 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*
- 'active' supervision techniques are implemented
- 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)
- the regulatory authority is notified 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
- 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

### 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 NATURE PLAY?

Medowie Gumnut Preschool 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)].

### NATURE 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

SOURCES

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Western Australian Legislation Education and Care Services National Law (WA) Act 2012

[Western Australian Legislation Education and Care Services National Regulations \(WA\) Act 2012](#)

REVIEW

POLICY REVIEWED BY	Sharon Hales	Director	29/1/2025
POLICY REVIEWED	AUGUST 2024	NEXT REVIEW DATE	AUGUST 2025
VERSION	V7.08.24		
MODIFICATIONS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• policy maintenance</li> <li>• minor edits</li> <li>• sources checked and repaired as required</li> </ul>		

POLICY REVIEW	PREVIOUS MODIFICATIONS	NEXT REVIEW DATE
<p>NOVEMBER/AUGUST 2023</p>	<p>NOVEMBER 2023</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Additional information relating to Bush Kinder/Forest Play added to policy</li> </ul> <p>Policy title change to Adventurous (Risky and Nature) Play Policy</p> <p>AUGUST 2023</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>	<p>AUGUST 2024</p>