

The H-N REACH EarlyON at Home

FAMILY NEWSLETTER



Taking the time to introduce children to risky and adventurous play in their younger years will give them the self-confidence, self-monitoring skills, and learning necessary to explore more independently as they grow and start adventuring more.

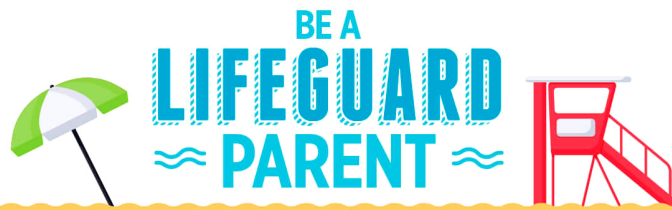
Retrieved from:
<https://www.takethemoutside.com/adventurous-play-to-conquer-fear/>

RISKY PLAY AND HEALTHY CHILD DEVELOPMENT

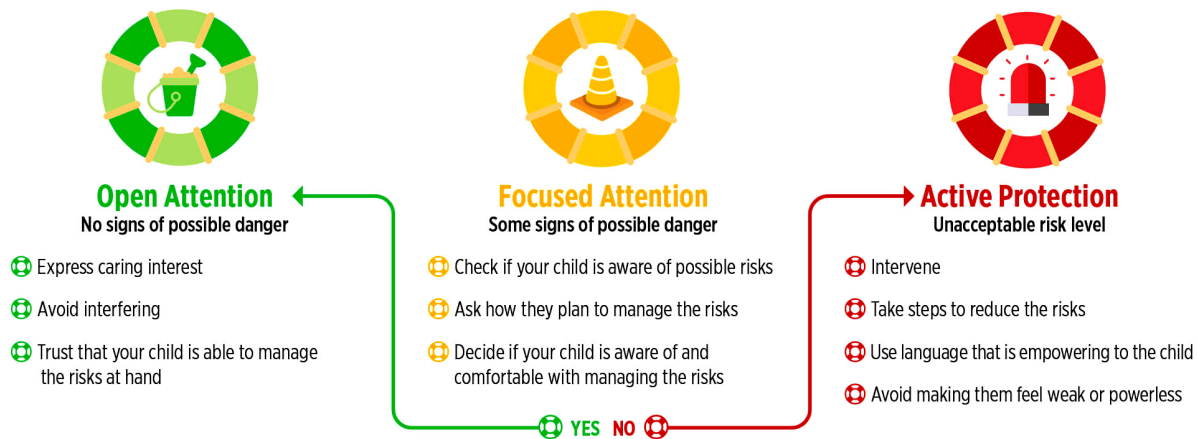
When you think of risk, what do you think of? Is it something you embrace, or something you shy away from? Do you remember what playgrounds used to look like compared to now? Gone are the days of the giant metal slides, the merry-go-rounds and the towering teeter-totters! Risk has become a bad word in the parenting world over the past few decades, but we're here to set the story straight . . .

Risky play is defined as the thrilling and exciting play where your child is uncertain of the outcome and can include the possibility of physical injury. Risky play provides opportunities - to problem solve, take chances and try new things. It helps develop executive functioning skills and resiliency, and when your child succeeds during risky play, it is a boost to their self-confidence and self-esteem. Risk also changes over time as your child moves through developmental milestones and gains more experience with the world. What is risky at one age (ie: jumping from the couch) becomes no risk or minimal risk when your child is older. Read on for more ideas about risky play and how to stay safe!

Retrieved from: <https://parachute.ca/en/injury-topic/playgrounds-and-play-spaces/unstructured-outdoor-play-and-risky-play/>



It's good to let children test their limits during play. Being a lifeguard parent means to provide vigilant care*, a parenting approach that allows children to develop an understanding of risk and the confidence to manage it.



THE LIFEGUARD APPROACH - ALLOWING RISKS SAFELY

If you gasp at the thought of allowing your child to climb a tree, join the club. Many parents are afraid to allow such risky play, in fear that their child may get hurt. However, according to Dr. Mariana Brussoni, a developmental psychologist at the University of British Columbia, we should be "acting like a lifeguard watching swimmers at the beach . . . the lifeguard doesn't intervene unless someone is really at risk for harm" (Brussoni, 2019). The above infographic gives you details about the three progressive stages of a 'lifeguard parent', and we elaborate for you here:

Open Attention: This is where parents should operate most of the time. Trust your child, but keep your eyes open.

Focused Attention: Here, you might start to perceive some early warning signs in your child's play. Check in and if your child is comfortable managing the risk, go back to practicing simple observation and open attention.

Active Protection: At this level, the risk is unacceptable, so it's time to jump in. Use empowering language (more on that later in this newsletter) and help them understand the risk without raising your voice or projecting your own fear.

Risky play has important benefits for your children. Managed in the right way, it can help them to develop confidence, improve motor skills and increase their physical activity.

The more risks
you allow your
children to
make, the
better they
learn to look
after
themselves.

Roald Dahl

Want to learn more about risky play? Grab your phone or listening device and check out this amazing podcast by Dr. Mariana Brussoni, developmental psychologist at the University of British Columbia and a leader in the research behind children's risky play. You can hear her speak about the value of risky play at <https://activeforlife.com/podcast-risky-play/>



SIX WAYS TO ENGAGE IN RISKY PLAY

Part of learning to manage our children's 'risky' play is educating ourselves about what risky play is exactly. Researchers have identified six kinds of risky play:

1. **Play at great heights:** Getting to climb high to see the world from different perspectives.
2. **Playing at high speed:** Spinning, sliding, running and swinging are ways of creating a feeling that we might fall.
3. **Playing with dangerous tools:** Hammers, screwdrivers, pocket knives - allows children to feel powerful and in control.
4. **Play near dangerous elements:** Fire, water and earth are things that children are naturally curious about and helping them to understand the risk gives them the opportunity to explore risks safely.

5. **Rough-and-tumble play:** Tackling, chasing, pulling and capturing are all normal parts of play and help children to develop their social skills.

6. **Play where children can 'disappear' or get lost:** There is a level of excitement and anticipation when playing peek-a-boo and hide-and-seek that can help children deal with times when they may be anxious later in life.

Risky play may make parents shudder, but our children have a lot to benefit from it. The challenge for parents is to learn how to support it in a healthy way!

Article retrieved from: <https://activeforlife.com/six-types-of-risky-play/>

INSTEAD OF "BE CAREFUL", TRY . . .

"Take your time."

"Please find a safe spot for your stick while you're running."

"Stay focused on what you're doing."

"Do you feel safe there?"

"Before you throw that rock, what do you need to look for?"

"Sticks need space - look around you - do you have enough space to swing that big stick?"

"I'm here if you need me."

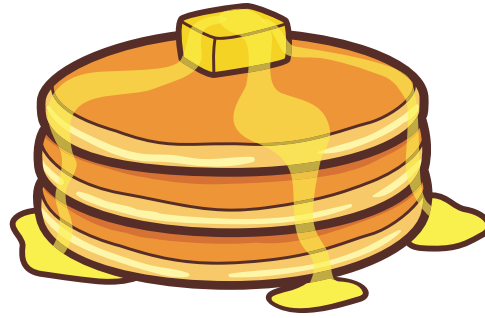


RECIPE OF THE WEEK

Check out this delicious and healthy breakfast treat that's easy to make with the kids!

No Sugar Added Pumpkin Pancakes

1 can pumpkin puree
1/2 cup old fashioned oats
2 whole eggs
Pinch cinnamon
Pinch Ground ginger
2 - 3 tablespoons of water



1. Combine all ingredients in blender except water and blend until smooth.
2. Add water if it is too thick.
3. If you are making it for children over 1 year of age, you can use honey or maple syrup in place of the water (babies should never have honey).
4. Heat skillet on low and grease with butter.
5. Cook pancakes on low heat, about 8 minutes per side. The pumpkin makes it a thick and sticky texture - perfect for little fingers!
6. Serve with butter or on it's own!



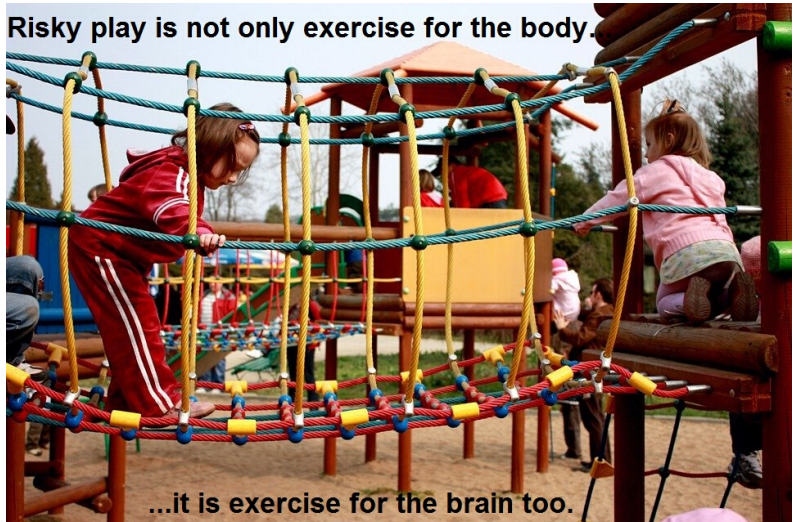
Haldimand-Norfolk REACH EarlyON Child and Family Centre

Looking for ideas of what to do
with the kids?
Want to sing along with us and
our favourite songs?
Looking for some cool recipes
for the summer?

Check out our Facebook page!!

We'll share lots of ideas and
upcoming contests with you too!

Risky play is not only exercise for the body.



...it is exercise for the brain too.

WE ARE STILL HERE FOR YOU!

Yes, things have changed a lot over the past month, but we are still here to help! Haldimand-Norfolk REACH is considered an essential service, and even though our sites are closed, we are working at home to stay connected with everyone, and to help those in need during these turbulent times.

If you or your child are in crisis, our Child and Youth Crisis Line is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. 1-866-327-3224

Feel free to find us on Facebook - we are the Haldimand-Norfolk REACH EarlyON Child and Family Centre! We're always posting activity ideas, circle time videos and stories, and tips to stay healthy at home.

Have an idea you'd like to see us try? Email us at earlyon@hnreach.on.ca



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