

*‘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.

Our Service 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		
3.1.2	Upkeep	Furniture and equipment are safe, clean and well maintained.
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.
QUALITY AREA 6: COLLABORATIVE PARTENERSHIPS WITH FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES		
6.2	Collaborative partnerships	Collaborative partnerships enhance children’s inclusion, learning and wellbeing
6.2.3	Community engagement	The service builds relationships and engages with its community

EDUCATION AND CARE SERVICES NATIONAL LAW AND REGULATIONS	
Sec. 167	Offence relating to protection of children from harm and hazards
Sec. 51	Approved number of places must not be exceeded
73	Educational program
78	Food and beverages
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
155	Interactions with children
156	Relationships in groups
158	Children’s attendance record to be kept by approved provider
165	Record of visitors
167	Record of services compliance
168	Policies and procedures are required in relation to enrolment and orientation
169	Additional policies and procedures-family day care service
171	Policies and procedures to be kept available

#### RELATED POLICIES

Administration of First aid Policy	Medical Conditions Policy
Acceptance and Refusal of Authorisation Policy	Nutrition and Food Safety Policy
Child Protection Policy	Physical Environment Policy
Child Safe Environment Policy	Safe Transportation Policy
Delivery of Children to and Collection from	Sleep and Rest Policy
Education and Care Services Premises Policy	Snake Awareness Policy
Emergency Evacuation Policy	Sun Safety Policy

<p>Health and Safety Policy Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Policy Excursion/Incursion Policy Interactions with Children, Families and Staff Policy</p>	<p>Supervision Policy Water Safety Policy Work Health and Safety Policy</p>
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## PURPOSE

Sprouts Early Learning recognises that adventurous and risky play is essential to children’s physical, emotional, cognitive and social development. Through opportunities that challenge balance, coordination, problem-solving, resilience and judgement, children develop competence, confidence and lifelong learning skills (Sandseter, 2010).

We believe children have the right to explore, test their capacities, encounter manageable risk and build resilience within environments that are thoughtfully designed and actively supervised. Our approach does not seek to eliminate risk, but to assess, manage and balance risk in ways that support children’s growth while protecting them from serious harm.

In accordance with the Western Australian Child Safe Standards, the safety, wellbeing and best interests of the child are the paramount consideration in all decision making. “Paramount” means of greater importance than any other matter.

While adventurous play involves elements of uncertainty and challenge, no experience will proceed where the likelihood or severity of harm outweighs the developmental benefit. All decisions relating to environment design, supervision, educator intervention and risk assessment will place the child at the centre and prioritise their physical and emotional safety, dignity and rights.

This policy ensures that risk-taking is intentional, developmentally appropriate and guided by professional judgement, critical reflection and duty of care. Through this balanced approach, we foster capable, resourceful and resilient children within a culture where safety and learning coexist.

## SCOPE

This policy applies to management, the approved provider, nominated supervisor, students, staff, families, visitors and children of the Service.

Sprouts Early Learning complies with the Western Australian Child Safe Standards and recognises that the safety, wellbeing and best interests of the child are the paramount consideration in all decision making.

“Paramount” means of greater importance than any other matter.



While this policy supports adventurous and risky play as essential for development, no experience will proceed where the risk of serious harm outweighs the developmental benefit. The child must be at the centre of all decisions relating to supervision, environment design, risk assessment and educator intervention.

Where competing interests arise — including program intentions, parental expectations, or operational convenience — the safety, dignity and wellbeing of the child will take precedence.

Where uncertainty exists, the Service will err on the side of child safety.

### **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 all 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 take manageable risks.”* (2018, p: 68).

### **IMPLEMENTATION**

Our Service will continually determine whether a learning environment is dangerous, or a potential learning opportunity may encourage risk taking.

Children are faced with risks every day. Rather than trying to eliminate all risks from children’s play, our Service 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 (Section 167 National Law).

In assessing risk, educators will apply a child safe lens and consider:

- Does this experience uphold the child’s physical and emotional safety?
- Is the child voluntarily engaging and able to withdraw?
- Is the child developmentally ready for this level of risk?
- Could supervision be strengthened to reduce likelihood of serious harm?
- Would a reasonable person conclude that the child’s best interests were prioritised?

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/ RESPONSIBLE PERSON/EDUCATORS WILL ENSURE:

- 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* for Bush Kinder/ Forest Play is conducted to identify potential hazards, assess the risks and minimise any risks that could potentially cause harm or injury to children
- a thorough risk assessment is conducted prior to a Bush Kinder/ Forest Play session, the Risk Assessment is to be approved by the Approved Provider
- the *First Aid Policy* and procedures are always followed while children are attending the Bush Kinder/ Forest Play
- to engage in critical reflection as a team and with the children about the risks and benefits of a new activity or process (see: ACECQA- [Talking about Practice: Adventurous Play. Developing a culture of risky play](#))

- 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*
- educators always employ 'active' supervision techniques at all times
- 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)
- management will notify the Regulatory Authorities 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 through the use of using positive language, guidance and enthusiasm
- children are not pushed or forced to do something they are not sure about
- 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

- they continue to meet their legal obligations and responsibilities as documented in the NQS and Education and Care Services National Law and Regulations.

#### 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 BUSH KINDER/FOREST PLAY?

Our Service 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)).

The purpose of the Bush Kinder/ Forest Play should be clearly identified by providing information on how the Bush Kinder / Forst Play supports the educational program and contributes to the outcomes for children. Our Service will conduct a risk assessment prior to Bush Kinder/ Forest Play with consideration given to:

- dog awareness with children and educators
- danger of snake and suitable bandages in first aid kit



- guidance to children about stranger danger
- what emergencies may occur and what we need to be prepared for
- medication needs and possible illnesses
- authorisations for all children prior to participation in the program
- sun safety clothing and sunscreen
- water safety (if applicable)
- weather conditions
- travel and possible unexpected delay
- ratios maintained in both service and excursion
- supervision appropriate for children's developmental needs
- Application of Child Safe Standards WA and paramount consideration — ensuring children's safety and best interests are prioritised in environmental selection, supervision levels, emergency planning and adult interactions.
- procedures and policies relating to excursions and transportation to be followed before children attend Bush Kinder or Forest school, including authorisations

### ITEMS TO BE TAKEN ON BUSH KINDER/ FOREST PLAY

The approved provider/ nominated supervisor must ensure that the following items are taken during participation of Bush Kinder/ Forest Play, as per the risk assessment:

- appropriate number of suitably equipped first aid kits
- fully charged and operating mobile phone
- emergency contact information details for all children participating
- medication for children requiring medical and relevant medical management plans
- items required for Bush Kinder/ Forest Play - such as sunscreen, hats, change of clothes, other equipment, wet weather gear
- child's attendance record
- food and water as required
- nappy change equipment if required

### BUSH KINDER/ FOREST SCHOOL 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

### CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT/REFLECTION

Our *Adventurous (Risky and Nature) Play Policy* will be reviewed on an annual basis in consultation with children, families, staff, educators and management.

### SOURCES

- Australian Children’s Education & Care Quality Authority. (2013). *Talking about practice: Adventurous play. Developing a culture of risky play*
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- [Education and Care Services National Regulations](#). (Amended 2023).
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### REVIEW

NEW POLICY	Donna Bush	Managing Director	Mar 2026
POLICY REVIEWED	March 2026	NEXT REVIEW DATE	March 2027
VERSION NUMBER	V05032026		
POLICY REVIEWED	MODIFICATIONS		NEXT REVIEW DATE
March 2026	Paramount Consideration Childsafe standards		Upon commencement of Bush Kinder excursions Or March 2027