**Risky Play policy**.

Policy statement.

At Mayfield Preschool we aim to provide a safe, nurturing and secure place in which children can learn through play, giving each child the freedom of independence and free choice, allowing them to develop confidence. Well planned play, both indoors and outdoors, is a key way in which young children learn to take ‘acceptable risks’ in their learning with enjoyment and challenge.

Understanding play

* Play is any freely chosen activity which a child find satisfying and creative. It may or may not require equipment, have an end product,or involve other people. Play may be boisterous or quiet, energetic, or contemplative, light-hearted or very serious. Play is one essential way in which children and young people come to understand themselves and the World around them. Play is a vital component of a child's positive development. Play is essential for physical, emotional and social development. Through play, children and young people explore the physical and social environment ,ideas and concepts and how to deal with situations that trouble them. In this way they learn through experiencing things that cannot be taught: such as
* self-confidence
* the sense of themselves as individuals,
* ability to make choices and cope with dispute,
* overcome fears.
* Values and principles
* Children are entitled to be treated with respect and see this model by practitioners around them, for their own unique combination of qualities and capabilities
* Children should have their opinions and reactions taken into account
* Children are part of and contributed to the cultural life of their communities.
* Children have a right to play in environments free from unacceptable levels of risk
* Children should be able to control their own play activity
* Children have the right to expect consistency and clarity in adults application of values.

Play and risk

The play sector publication, Best Play surmises that play provision should aim 2to manage the balance between the need to offer risk and the need to keep children safe from harm”. When children play and explore the environment around them, they need and want to be able to take risks. In allowing a child to take an ‘acceptable risk’, pushing boundaries and developing their capabilities, we are facilitating them in an active. In being an active learner It is an essential part of the learning process that children be able to explore and freely play with chosen activities and engage in situations around them ,if they are to develop new skills and be able to learn independently judge risks in a safe, controlled environment.

* Acceptable risk as summarised by the Play Safety Forum (2008) is.
* Where likelihood is extremely low.
* The hazards of very explicit to users
* There are obvious benefits from taking the risk
* Further reduction of risk would remove the benefits
* There were no reasonable practical ways to manage the risk.

Play at Preschool

* During their play at Mayfield Preschool, it is ‘acceptable’ that children may be exposed to the odd bump or bruise. However children will not be exposed to significant harm.
* The preschool extends the choice and control that children have over their play, the freedom they enjoy, the satisfaction and learning experience that they gain from it.
* The preschool recognises that children need to test boundaries, take risks in learning and responds positively to that need.
* The preschool manages the balance between children's need to want and play and the need to keep them from being exposed to unacceptable risk of injury. (for example, we respect that children will take risks with climbing on play equipment and will allow them the opportunity to explore what their bodies can do. We will however be close by to ensure they do not sustain an injury that would put them at risk)
* We will maximise the range of play opportunities allowing the children in our care to foster independence and a growing self esteem
* The preschool fosters children's respect for others and offers social interaction.
* We openly encourage children to be aware of themselves, their self and healthcare - fostering and understandig for healthy growth and development, whilst continuing to allow their creativity to shine.

Criteria for playing equipment

* At Mayfield Preschool we believe that the environment surrounding a child is imperative to the type of learner they will become and that it needs to be stimulating and fun whilst given opportunity to create their successes. Or environment is :
* Varied and interesting, providing an element of challenge
* Allows children to explore the natural world using their senses.
* Give space is to experiment with movement. Eg. running, jumping, rolling, climbing and balancing
* Encourages social interactions.
* Allows children to experience a range of emotions and have opportunity and have opportunity to talk about these in a safe and nurturing space.

Planning for Play

Play is emphasised as the way in which children can experiment and explore and so therefore learn. Most play will therefore be child-led, with children naturally setting play at their own levels and exploring their own interests, allowing them to play and so concentrate for longer. We will provide adult initiated and led activities, primarily used to extend or children's previous interests and learning. in order to develop their sustained thinking and skills set. Our planning will be drawn up weekly allowing for the previous week's learning to be taken into account, and for the child's interest to be accounted for.

Links to the EYFS: Safeguarding and promoting children's welfare. Suitable premises ,environment and, equipment organisation.

Further information. Play Safety Forum, 2008.