



## WORKSHOP SUMMARY - FINAL REPORT

- What:** Risky Play & Outdoor and Unstructured Play Workshop
- Where:** Lakehead University Faculty Lounge
- When:** May 30-31, 2016  
9:30 am – 4:00 pm
- Presented By:** KidActive
- Hosts:** Thunder Bay and District Health Unit/Healthy Kids Community Challenge Thunder Bay
- Facilitated By:** Sonja Lukkasen - Forest School Canada/Child and Nature Alliance  
Susan Patterson -KidActive

### Overview

This two-day workshop addresses the evidence-based connections between healthy child development, outdoor play and risky play. It includes knowledge-sharing, current evidence, research and community practice that supports the role of outdoor play (risky play and *unstructured* play) where children live, learn and play. Access to and opportunities for outdoor play in health, education, recreation, parks, community centres, after-school programs and public spaces are important parts of a healthy community. We will look at the theory and practice of outdoor play and risky play, build a common understanding of concepts and improve our collective understanding of local challenges and opportunities to increase the quality and quantity of outdoor play for children and youth in our communities.

Through case studies and community stories we will examine how the Position Statement on Active Outdoor Play is being used across Canada to address barriers to outdoor play and risky play. We will comprehensively address perceptions of liability, duty of care, risk management and risk assessment systems, providing practical skills and assessment systems to apply to your professional and community environments.

This training is designed for multi-sector stakeholders including parents, caregivers, childcare providers, educators, recreation professionals, planners, municipal leaders and health professionals. It builds increased knowledge and understanding of risk and play as they relate to healthy child development including learning.

## Workshop Goals

1. Share and document local knowledge, assets, opportunities and goals.
2. Share evidence-based knowledge, practice and emerging research connecting outdoor and risky play to healthy child development
3. Share definitions, case studies and tools (e.g. risk assessment) to strengthen our understanding of the benefits of outdoor play and risky play.
4. Reframe concepts of risk and provide simple definitions of what is and is not risky play.
5. Build and/or strengthen a connected network of partners and collaboration to support increased quality and quantity of outdoor and risky play.
6. Strengthen multi-sector support to increase local opportunities that connect children's health and well-being to their access to outdoor play (including risky play and nature).

## DAY 1

### Welcome

**Blessing** - Elder Isabelle Mercier

**Opening** - Knowledge Building Circle – *Inquiry-based discussion on challenges and questions around outdoor play and risky play for our children and communities.*

*"Why are you here and why is this important to you?"*

- I'm looking for a support to change culture in where I work
- Seeking support and the tools needed to support risk
- I want it to be the way it was when we were kids
- I support my team but I don't feel supported by my management team
- "We ONLY play outside"
- To find resources and evidence to support the change in my place of work
- How I parent and how I work are not aligned
- Risk management and preparation starts at home
- Lead by example and show peers and the community that risk has benefits
- We disarm our kids by not giving them opportunities to take risks

### Definition of Risk

*"Thrilling and exciting forms of play that involves a risk of injury"*

- We can't do that, we might get hurt
- We are trying to implement and try, but the ultimate question is what is going to happen?
- The boundary is set by whether or not we are "allowed"
- Let's let kids be kids
- It is US that instills fear in kids
- Because we are limiting competency and autonomy, we are reaping what we sow, we are the ones who will have to deal with the fall out of their abilities, based on our limitations
- It's crazy that we have to provide evidence to allow outdoor play
- We need to make a culture shift
- We need to provide tools to parents to change their insight and perspective
- We have a chalkboard at our door and the kids need to write on it where they are and when they will be home, we have defined boundaries allowing kids to stretch limits

### **Clothesline Flags (independent task)**

Where are you on the continuum? Make a flag that shows *"IF no one is holding you back, how risky are you in your place of work?"*

- (results of this exercise is in the photos folder "Risk Continuum- Clothesline Flags" in the master participant folders)

**What we know** - *Understanding Evidence-based knowledge - Defining key concepts and using shared language*

- Sharing of the Position Statement and Report Card
- Presentation of evidence and research to support Risky Play (presentation is in the participant folder)

### **Outdoor Play in Practice**

Group Task/ Sharing Success stories: *"What is working well around supporting risky play in your place of work?"*

- Sharing cases with "decision makers"
- Trying things without asking
- Asking for support from managers
- Finding and sharing success stories, using others ideas

### **Knowledge to Action**

Personal Risk - *Where do you fit in the line? Lining up according to the level of risk YOU are comfortable with.*

- Group lined up from most likely to take risks to least likely to take risks

**Connecting Risk to Play** - comfort level and stepping outside our comfort zone, the group participated in a ball toss where they were challenged by a number of balls in the air and the task of remembering each other's names

Participant - (Tyler) led us through Manhunt

The group debriefed the experience of outdoor active play and shared the feelings associated with the game:

- Nature is stimulating
- Fresh air around us feels good
- Endorphins get going as we run
- Hiding is fun!
- Everyone agreed to having smiled or laughed at least once in the game
- Being outside is natural and easy

**Closing of Day 1** - Group Knowledge Building Circle - Answer the question: *"What did you gain from today?"* and *"What was your Ah-ha moment?"*

(Replies were shared in KBC and were not recorded)

## DAY 2

### Outdoor Play Session

30 minutes of play, observations (photos in the the participant folder) "Day 2 Outdoor Unstructured Play" Group was asked to simply "play" with no structured activities or defined rules. Play area was defined. A sample outdoor element (rope and wooden disk) was provided for use. Activities initiated by participants were:

- Unjamming a log from the creek, barefooted in cold water
- Fishing
- Fort and shelter building
- Sitting by the creek
- Climbing trees
- Sitting in a tree
- Walking
- Using the outdoor element of rope and wooden disk to swing and play on
- Conversation and walking

The group shared the experience, capturing: it was fun not to be told what to do, it was an adventure, it felt good to just be in nature with no plans, we didn't mean to really build a fort...it just happened, I almost caught a fish, I didn't know these trails were here...I will make use of them now that I know.

### Risk Benefit Tool

Using the Child and Nature Alliance "Risk Benefit Assessment" with the review topics of Experience, Narrative, Daily and Site Assessments, the group divided into 2-3 person working groups to discuss the tool and how they can use this in their daily work. Also discussed was Dynamic Risk Assessment, assessing Risk on the fly. Link to the UK tool can be found in the folder called "Workshop Provided Input of Helpful Links and Resources"

### Evaluation

Participants were asked to complete the Survey Monkey survey, results are posted in the participant folder.

**Video** - About Forest School OCT video was shared. Link in participant folder.

**Success/Experience Panel** - 3 people were selected to share a success story, event, organization that incorporates risk.

- Karen - Scoot suits (Karen has provided info in the participant folder)
- Linda - Evergreen
- Rob - Hockey tragedy, with positive outcome, risk connection

### Play Activity - *Laughing Yoga*

The group laid down on the ground beside another person, near enough to touch and laughing spread across the crowd. Stressing the importance of play, taking risks to do new things, gave a leadership role to Maryanne to lead the group in an activity she had only done once.

### Inspired for Change - *Mapping Next Steps for Community Based and Child -Centred Change*

Working in subgroups the participants were asked "What 3 actions can this community network take to proceed with an area wide plan, moving forward to implement change"

Each group presented their answers. The whole group was then asked to identify what the most common first, second and third answers were, and agree to the first 3 actions.

The actions that were established are as follows:

1. Educate others using evidence and research
2. Engage the community - welcome others
3. Build a network

**Leadership and Deadlines** - *What is next, who will lead it and when will it happen?* - An action plan

It was decided by the group that:

Linda will send a reminder to the group on June 15, 2016 asking participants to write a comment and place it in the "parking lot" file in the participant folder by June 20th. This may include the changes or impacts that have taken place in the participant's community or place of work, (that they may have) contributed to since the workshop by using the tools provided.

**Closing of Day 2** -

On behalf of KidActive, thank you to participants and hosts for this event success. Please feel free to contact either Sonja or Susan at anytime with questions, concerns or comments. We will follow up with a report and survey results within the next few weeks.

**OUTCOMES**

- o Increased knowledge of evidence based practice and research to support outdoor play
- o Improved understanding of language related to risky play - liability, hazards, risk and duty of care
- o Skill development to implement risk benefit analysis and risk assessment systems
- o Increased knowledge and evidence base to shift towards an outdoor, risky, unstructured and nature play-based culture
- o Identification of emerging and innovative approaches to system change
- o Strengthened connections between local network of partners and evidence-based resources

**RESOURCES**

*As safe as possible or as safe as necessary - can injury prevention include healthy risk promotion -*

<http://injuryprevention.bmj.com/content/early/2014/12/22/injuryprev-2014-041241.full>

*A Framework for Recreation in Canada*

[http://lin.ca/sites/default/files/attachments/Framework%20For%20Recreation%20In%20Canada\\_EN.pdf](http://lin.ca/sites/default/files/attachments/Framework%20For%20Recreation%20In%20Canada_EN.pdf)

*Position Statement on Active Outdoor Play*

<https://www.participaction.com/en-ca/thought-leadership/research/2015-position-statement-on-active-outdoor-play>

*Ottawa Charter for Health Promotion*

<http://www.who.int/healthpromotion/conferences/previous/ottawa/en/>

*Rethinking Childhood Blog by Tim Gill*

1.

[https://rethinkingchildhood.com/2016/02/22/playground-claim-landmark-court-judgement-british-columbia\\_canda/](https://rethinkingchildhood.com/2016/02/22/playground-claim-landmark-court-judgement-british-columbia_canda/)

2.

<https://rethinkingchildhood.com/2016/05/25/educators-playworkers-decisions-dynamic-risk-benefit-assessment/>

Remember to look in the Participant File for all additional information and input, photos and upcoming actions.