

APPROPRIATE RISK-TAKING/USE OF GIANT SLIDE

NATIONAL QUALITY STANDARDS

Element 2.2.2: Physical activity is promoted through planned and spontaneous experiences and is appropriate for each child.

Element 2.3.1: Children are adequately supervised at all times.

Element 2.3.3 Every reasonable precaution is taken to protect children from harm and any hazard likely to cause injury.

Element 3.2: The environment is inclusive, promotes competence, independent exploration and learning through play.

Education and Care Services National Regulations: 168, (2),(h)

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to determine procedures which will be implemented by the Centre to effectively manage any potential risk in relation to the use of the giant slide.

POLICY

It is the policy of the Centre to ensure that the safety and well-being of the children is maintained at all times.

The prevention of serious injury is an important consideration in playground provision. However, safety considerations also need to be balanced with children's needs for play, learning and fun in the playground. There is a growing body of research that highlights the benefits for children when play environments provide risk and challenge. There is also corresponding evidence of negative outcomes when children are not given such opportunities; and that striving for 'risk free' playgrounds can actually diminish learning and development opportunities.

Playgrounds can help children to learn about themselves - their strengths, abilities, achievements and their limitations; and about how to assess risk, problem solve, communicate, collaborate and get along with others.

Given children's appetite for risk-taking, one of the factors that should be considered is the likelihood that children will seek out risks elsewhere, in environments that are not controlled or designed for them, if play provision is not challenging enough. Another factor is the learning that can take place when children are exposed to, and must learn to deal with, environmental hazards. Play provision is uniquely placed to offer children the chance to learn about risk in an environment designed for that purpose, and thus to help children equip themselves to deal with similar hazards in the wider world.

It is the policy of the Centre to encourage appropriate risk-taking during play; the giant slide is one play element in the playground where children can learn about themselves in the context of assessing risk and their own abilities.

Importantly risk and challenge in playgrounds must be age and developmentally appropriate for the children who will use them. Also, it is the policy of the Centre that children will never be pressured into taking an appropriate risk if they do not want to.

Responsible supervision is a key component to ensuring the Centre provides a safe environment also in relation to appropriate risk-taking.

The following measures are to be implemented at the Centre:

RISK MANAGEMENT

- The Centre shall strike a balance between the risks and the benefits of appropriate risk-taking in play. This should be done on the basis of a risk assessment. Crucially, this risk assessment should involve a risk-benefit trade-off between safety and the benefits of appropriate risk-taking in play, which include the following (according to current research):
- Appropriate risk - taking during play helps children improve their motor skills, balance and coordination and gain confidence in being physically active.
- Children given opportunities to take risks in outside play develop confidence and are more likely to persist and persevere in problem solving in the playground as well as in their academic endeavours.
- Insufficient playground novelty and challenge can lead to inappropriate risk-taking; and prevent children from developing decision-making skills needed to make accurate risk judgements.
- In general, children learn about themselves through appropriate risk-taking in play - their strengths, abilities, achievements and their limitations; and about how to assess risk, problem solve, communicate, collaborate and get along with others.
- Educators will carry out suitable and sufficient risk assessments intended to promote a balanced approach to risk management, articulating and considering the benefits to children alongside the potential risks, with a focus on hazards with the potential to cause real harm. It is not about creating a risk-free environment, but about ensuring that reasonable precautions are taken to avoid injury.
- The Centre Director will ensure routine checking of facilities and prioritisation of repairs and ongoing maintenance.

- Educators will ensure appropriate and effective supervision at all times, communicate with each other effectively and always be aware of locations identified for optimised supervision outcomes when supervising children (refer to supervision charts on display).

USE OF THE GIANT SLIDE

- The slide entrance must always be secured and kept inaccessible to children when not in use.
- Educators will only allow children to use the slide in an organised manner and in accordance with the procedures as set out in this policy. They will discuss these procedures with children as part of the program and repeat the “slide rules” with them regularly. The procedures will be implemented consistently.
- Children will never be unsupervised when using the slide.
- No child under the age of 3 years will be allowed to use the slide.
- Children will never be asked to, or put under pressure to use the slide if they feel anxious about it, or if they prefer to use the staircase. Peer pressure will always be discouraged by the educators.
- Children will line up in front of the access gate before they are allowed into the “starting zone” at the slide entrance.
- One educator will always stand in front of the slide entrance, manage access to the slide, and assist children as required.
- The slide will only be used if at least one educator is positioned to supervise and manage the arrival zone at the slide exit on the main playground.
- Only **one child at a time** will enter the starting zone, and only one child at the time will use the slide.
- Children will hold onto the handrails, then sit down on the slide entrance and only slide “**legs first**”. They will not be allowed to use the slide backwards, “head first”, or on their stomach.
- Children must not carry any items in their hands/arms when using the slide. Educators should also check for any items in the children’s pockets that may hurt the child when using the slide.
- One educator will receive the child at the slide exit and ensure that the slide exit and the arrival zone are kept clear.
- Once a child has slid down and cleared the arrival zone, the educator at the slide exit **will call out ‘ready’** to the educator at the slide entrance so that the next child can use the slide.
- Educators have to confirm the slide’s appropriate temperature before allowing it to be used, particularly on warm or hot days. Educator who is supervising at the end of the slide to ensure that the bottom of the slide is clear of water and sand
- The slide will only be used once to access the main playground. It shall not be used repeatedly unless appropriate supervision and the procedures above can be ensured also during repeated use of the slide.

REFERENCES

- Education and Care Services National Regulations
- The Early Year Learning Framework
- Kids safe Victoria

ASSOCIATED POLICIES

- Supervision
- Accident Prevention
- Safety Checks and Maintenance of Building and Equipment
- Emergency Action Plan and Evacuation
- Accidents and Incidents

REVIEW

The Centre (together with educators) will review this policy every 12 months.

The Approved Provider and Centre Director ensure that at all times all educators maintain and implement these policies and procedures.

Families are encouraged to collaborate with the Centre to review the policy and procedures.

Last review: 2.03.2024

Next review: DD/MM/YYYY