



SPARROW'S NEST PLAY

ENCOURAGING RISK

Encouraging Risk Guide

Attending to “Risky Play”

Learning to negotiate risk is an important part of childhood development, but risk is healthy only insofar as it is managed, to the appropriate degree, by a knowledgeable and attentive adult. Nature-based programs manage hazards in the environments and experiences that allow children to take the risks that are individual and developmentally appropriate as they emerge within the natural world.

instead of

“BE CAREFUL!”

Say or ask instead:

- Take your time.
- Do you feel safe?
- Do you feel stable?
- Have you done this before?
- Find more space/Do you need more space?
- Please move carefully near the _____.
- Let’s stay focused.
- Try moving _____.
- I’m here if you need me.
- What’s your plan?
- Notice how _____.

Simple Rules for Nature Safety

- 1) **Boundaries:** Children are expected to stay within the boundaries that have been established by teachers.
- 2) **Climbing trees:** Children may climb trees while under adult supervision. They *may not climb higher than twice their height and only after they have demonstrated competence.*
- 3) **Sticks:** The children may not play with sticks that are *longer than their arm*, unless it is clearly and responsibly being used as a walking stick, a tool (digging for example), or for building, under the supervision of the adult.
- 4) **Water safety:** All visits to the creek and pond are under full supervision of the teachers. Children will be allowed to wade in water that is less than knee deep while wearing boots.