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I hereby declare that this research project titled the attitudes and views of early years practitioners on the importance of Risky play in early childhood development is presented in partial fulfilment of the Bachelors of Arts Honours degree in early years’ care and education to the department of life-long learning, Athlone Institute of Technology is entirely the work of the author and has not been presented to any other higher education institute or for any other assignment. It is all my original work carried out under the supervision of Dr. Vincent O Connor. The information and data provided in this project are true to the best of my knowledge. Where anybody else’s opinions or views are used these are each referenced.

Signed: _________________________ Date: ______________________
Irene Corcoran 01/04/2017
Research Proposal Form
BA- In Early Years Education and care.

Name: Irene Corcoran          Class Group: Year 4, Part Time.

Working title: Owner/Manager

Aim of research project: To explore the views of early years practitioners’ in Offaly on Risky play in child development of children aged 3-5 years.

Objectives:

1. Risk management: To examine the early years’ practitioner’s knowledge, attitudes and experiences of risky play.
2. Child Development: To explore the benefits of risky play in the development of 3-5year olds and how early years practitioners implement risky play.
Acknowledgements

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Finally I would like to acknowledge and thank the contribution of the respondents whose participation enabled this research.
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Chapter 1: introduction

Abstract:
An investigation into the benefits and barriers to child development through early years’ professionals current attitudes and values towards risky play in preschool settings in a time when their inspectorate seek opportunities for risk play to promote child development in the early years sector.

Introduction:
My research is a survey that will access normative attitudes, values, beliefs and implementation of Risky play opportunities by early years practitioners in early years care and education environments to promote the development of children aged between 3 and 5 years of age. I seek to determine how much importance a sample of Early years professionals put on the provision of risky play and to establish what EYPs determine as risky play opportunities to be.
Chapter 2: Literature review

2.1 Introduction
This study will investigate and evaluate the views of early years practitioners’ on Risky play in child development of children aged 3-5 years. Risky play can be defined as a physical activity play, which is thrilling and exciting with a risk of physical injury (Sandseter (2007; Little &Wyver, 2008).

Elements of risky-play are heights, speed, dangerous tools (Wilkinson, 2015) and movements associated with risk-play are swinging, climbing, rolling, hanging and sliding which are essential for their motor skills, balance, coordination and body awareness (Wilkinson, 2015) to extend their limits and learn life skills that will aid them later in life when watchful adults are no longer present (Apter, 2007).

2.2 Background to the topic
Kernan suggests the understanding of play in early childhood is low risk however, Theorising play in early childhood identifies the importance of adults balance between children’s need for safety with that of risk-taking and challenge that are necessities in children’s development and wellbeing, (Kernan, 2007). However, Flood’s Child development for students in Ireland book gave problem solving skills in cognitive development a mere mention, stating that children problem solve using a “trial and error approach” (Flood, 2010) with no use of the term Risky play nor importance of risk taking in child development or decision making.

2.3 Objective 1: Risk management: To examine the early years’ practitioner’s knowledge, attitudes and experiences of risky play
Brussoni et al, (2012) Risky Play and Children’s safety paper focuses on free play with specific attention to risky play outdoors, obstacles such as declining opportunities for outdoor free play and goals of risk reduction being met rather than meeting children’s developmental and play needs. They suggest children be kept as safe as necessary rather than as safe as possible. Wilkinson agrees social and environmental factors are impacting children’s opportunities for outdoor risk play (Wilkinson, 2015). Brussoni et al, (2012) find children universally prefer sensational activities such as height and speed however few parks provide opportunity to build on, develop or master skills, these insufficient challenges can lead to boredom and misuse of equipment and excessive risk taking which often leads to unintentional injury.

Parental and societal fears have seen a decline in opportunity to test competencies and imagination in play spaces, research finds parental concern over child safety is the most significant influence on them gaining access to independent play while parents recognise that early restrictions on children’s play may increase risk as the children develop independence. Parental over-protection has been associated with increased rates of anxiety disorders in children and research suggests imposing too many restrictions on outdoor risky play may hamper children’s development. (Mariana Brussoni, 2012).

Wilkinson (2015) identifies the importance that staff and parents are aware of the importance of risky play and that safety regulations and policies do not hinder this vital form of play. Wilkinson states risky play opportunities are limited as equipment only provides minimum risk and preschool teachers perspectives and approaches to risky play are crucial in quality provision. (Wilkinson, 2015)

A comprehensive study of literature on Risk and play (Gleave, 2008) selected through library searches using terms ‘risk, ‘play’, challenge’ and ‘children’ drew together texts on the benefits of risky play and parental and public attitudes to and perceptions of risky play, followed by risk management and theories, there were based predominately in public areas and playgrounds with children of all ages mostly from 7 years upwards. She identified a New Zealand author whom noted the children’s desire to participate in physical challenges was fulfilled more by the attitudes of the teachers who facilitated risk-taking behaviour rather than by the equipment. (Stephenson, 2003)
Research found that perceptions among parents, children and play-workers was that the need for safety was balanced with opportunities to risk take and that increasing the challenging facilities would increase play value for the children. (Franklin 2002), Concurring with McKendrick findings of positive attitudes of parents towards provision for risk taking. That children are safety conscious and confident in their risk taking judgements and they would gain from an increase of challenges (McKendrick, 2000).

Cooper identifies a difference in attitude of carer depending on their own gender and that of parents depending on the gender of the child. With males being more accepting of risk taking and parents allowing males to participate in a greater degree of risk play. (Cooper, 2000)

Researchers believe minor injuries and getting dirty are important in positive childhood experiences and prevention will restrict play (John and Wheway, 2004).

European safety standard is the most common approach to evaluate play facilities but is a recommendation rather than a legal requirement. However in order to be covered for insurance claims these rules are followed regardless to their relevance to the setting which is inappropriate where retaining aspects or excitement is necessary. Ball identified people hold different perspectives on safety based partially on evidence, partially on evidence values or opinions, this speculative approach is problematic when a group present their opinions as factual (Ball in Thom et al, 2007).

Our current social climate of risk adverse culture has led to a fear of legal action, causing avoidance of more risky play opportunities (Gill, 2007) and lead to ‘Dumbing down” of playgrounds (Ball in Thom et al, 2007) leaving the play value in them so limited that they barely register any score on play value (Heseltine, 1995) Causing standardisation of play facilities with few facilities for challenging play. (Ball in Thom et al, 2007) Clear guidance has not been provided (Wheway, 2008).

2.4 Child Development: To explore the benefits of risky play in the development of 3-5year olds and how early years practitioners implement risky play.

The benefits of outdoor play for young children was researched by Barnardos for their Outdoor play matters booklet which identifies that it is common for parents to worry about the risks involved but that that these experiences are required for children to develop an understanding of consequence of not being careful, to learn their abilities and limitations. One of the best implementation methods to teach risk management to children is to teach them how to deal with difficult or tricky situations within controlled conditions and allow them have the experience to draw from. This booklet was designed for parents and EYPs 0-6years and upwards and lists the risks to child development if children are given too many limits and not enough long periods of time outside. (Willoughby, 2014)

Over cautious fears for the safety of children with disabilities can cause them to be excluded from play provisions (John and Wheway, 2004) (Gleave, 2008)

Sandseter’s small scale purposive sampling group research identified play in general inclusive of risky-play is a voluntary, intrinsically motivated and optimal experience that brings arousal or excitement and is a way of enhancing physical fitness in childhood with carry-over effects such as better health and anti-phobic effects in adulthood. Results of the study have implication for attitudes towards risky play in preschools as child should be allowed, supported and inspired to seek, carry out risky play in preschool as the benefits of risky play need to be highlighted (Sandseter, 2009).

Play involves risk taking which involves an element of danger, EYP’s provide an environment with possibilities for exploration, discovery and risk taking in an environment that is as safe as possible, children should be actively involved in keeping themselves and others safe, through careful supervision, correct adult-child ratios, age and stage appropriate equipment that is well maintained and conforms with EC mark; EYPs provide this safe place they can then engage with the children (Donohoe & Gaynor, 1999, pp. 128, 129)

Children learn how to manage risk as they get to test themselves and explore their abilities, they learn the consequence of misjudgement within a managed environment where the risk of serious harm is reduced. Some children actively seek risky situations, risky play provision gives them the opportunity to satisfy their search for excitement in a managed
environment which could reduce the risk that they will spend time in truly dangerous environments. (Ball, et al., 2013) this is affirmed by start-strong statistics that for ever €2,850 invested in early childhood €70,513 is saved annually (Crooks & De Buis, 2011).

2.5 Conclusion
The findings of this study are valuable to the childcare sector as in a highly regulated sector where safety is important and given priority over child’s potential developmental progress risk management needs to be regulated. EYP’s knowledge, attitudes and experiences of risky play directly affects the implementation or lack of risk-play in services. The new inspections require provision for challenging and safety risk taking in the outdoor environment to provide a range of developmentally appropriate and challenging activities for all children (TUSLA, 2016)
Chapter 3: Methodology

3.1 Introduction
In this chapter the research method will be explained and be divided into five sections: research method, the sample group; the process, ethical considerations and limitations in finding out Risk management: To examine the early years’ practitioner’s knowledge, attitudes and experiences of risky-play, to explore benefits of risky-play in the development of 3-5 year olds and how early years practitioners implement risky-play.

3.2 Method
A quantitative research method, will allows the researcher to answer the research questions most effectively. Punch (2005, p.28) claims that ‘Quantitative researchers collect facts and study the relationship of one set of facts to another’. A quantitative research method will be used to collect data. The Childcare Practitioners perceptions will be examined using questionnaires designed by the researcher. The collected data will provide a broad picture of Childcare Practitioners perceptions and views and it will ‘make it possible to draw comparisons between responses’ (Robert-Holmes, 2011, p.165). Twenty self-completion questionnaires will be distributed in North Offaly with a cover letter and consent form (Appendix 1) in person and provide a self-addressed envelope for participants to return their questionnaire anonymously or accept questionnaires back on the day as preferred by the participants.

3.3 Procedure
With permission twenty self-completion questionnaires will be distributed in person to twenty early years practitioners on April 1st 2017 in hope of receiving a good response rate and prompt return respectfully requested. To ensure the data is protected a self-addressed envelope for participants to return their questionnaire anonymously is provided. The researcher will request questionnaires are promptly returned ad provide a deadline of two weeks, this will give the participants a clear timeframe to complete the questionnaires. The questionnaire information will outline what is expected from the participants. Completing the questionnaire should take no more than ten minutes, participants will be assured that no names will appear in any documents and that the results of the study will be published. A pilot study (Appendix 2) was conducted on fourteen fellow students with an education background. The aim of the study was to identify any problems with content or structure, to ensure that the questionnaire was easy to understand and the instructions were clear and relevant to the objectives outlined in the research project. Some alterations were advised to question structure the layout of the questionnaire, this advice was greatly appreciated and changes made.

3.4 Participants
The researcher will use a convenience sample of Childcare Practitioners from North Offaly in the midlands region of Ireland. The participants work in, own or manage an early years’ service in the childcare sector, are of different experience and qualification level and have each completed a participant consent form (Appendix 3).

3.5 Ethics
The researcher will seek informed consent from Childcare Practitioners in order to collect data. Participants will be informed that they can withdraw from the project at any time. No names or signatures will be required. As part of the informed consent process under the Irish Data Protection Acts the researcher will explain to the participants what will happen to the data they provided.
3.6 Limitations
This is a small scale research project conducted over a short period of time. The findings will be predominantly based on Childcare Practitioners in North Offaly in the midland region only and are of different training levels. This project will be influenced by sample size, occupational status and level of experience in early years care and educations.

3.7 Proposed method of data analysis
The data results will be analysed and presented in the form of informative paragraphs, graphs and charts in the results chapter.
Chapter 4: Results

4.1: Introduction

Twenty questionnaires were distributed in a small area of north Offaly. They were effective as they provided valid confidential information required for the research process. Question 1 gathered information on early years’ practitioners (EYPs) attitude and knowledge of risky play. Questions 2 and 3 provided data on EYPs safety training and the use of maximum child to adult ratios. Questions 4 to 6 gather information determining what extent of importance EYPs put on child safety in relation to the provision of risky play to promote child development. Questions 7 to 10 gathered implementation information.

Question 11 gathered information on the attitude of the EYP. Question 12 gathered data on what EYPs deem risky play as this term is speculative and ranges depending on the abilities of each child. Questions 13 to 15 gathered information on implementation and promotion of risky play. Questions 16 to 18 gather information on EYPS experience of Risky Play. Questions 19 to 21 gathered information on the influence of Risk play in child development.

The elementary statistics about the staffing and training and information not depicted in graphs, gathered by the questionnaires is presented in the initial paragraph. Followed by information relating to Objective 1 and objective 2.
4.2 Objective 1: Risk management: To examine the early years’ practitioner’s knowledge, attitudes and experiences of risky play.

70% of Early years’ practitioner (EYPs) agree or strongly agree there is a certain element of risk involved in all types of play. There is an average of 5 staff per service; The majority services have 100% of staff trained in manual handling with 5% of services having no training in this area. A vast bulk of services have 100% of staff trained up to level 5 in first aid while 5% of services have 33% of staff trained to this level. Most of the services are running on the maximum adult : children staff ratio which is 1:11.

All but one participant deemed the level of importance on risky play in early years’ setting as either important or very important, the one participant finds it very unimportant. Just over half of all participants feel they provide adequate provision for children to engage in risky-play with one commenting that they have “a clinical outdoor play area and would like more adventure".
Importance of reduction of Risky Play for safety purposes

What activities are risky play?

No Risk  Risky Play  Too Risky
4.3 Objective: Child Development: To explore the benefits of risky play in the development of 3-5 year olds and how early years practitioners implement risky play

Risky play is implemented mostly in a structured manner with close supervision and turn taking, some services informally introduce it by allowing access during free play, as part of an activity and free access after introduction with 75% of participants having ever accessed the risky play opportunities in their service. Less than half of the participants have ever researched ways to provide risky play and those of whom have used mostly online resources including google, YouTube and Pinterest other sources included attendance at a workshop, books, magazines and journals.

A small percentage of participants do not promote risky play while the vast majority promote it outdoors, indoors to a lesser extent and some encourage it for at home by informing parents.
One alternative was offered by a participant in the case that a parent does not want child getting dirty or taking part in risky play this was to “exclude that child and offer an alternative activity”.

Less than half the participants have removed a piece of equipment due to potential risk, mostly monthly or annually, mostly due to risk assessment, predominantly identified by the practitioner themselves.

One participant saw no advantage in risk while, less than half of participants felt physical development was one of the main advantages of risk play with 85% agreeing the main advantage to a child is cognitive development with the Main advantages being recognised as (A) Exploration, understanding, self-awareness, (B) Risk management, decision making and problem solving and (C) Self-esteem, confidence, satisfaction. These points reappeared throughout the comments with additional factors including physical development, fun, competitive and adrenaline.

The main disadvantage is the risk to child safety. Some concerns of legislation, staff ratios, insurance, inspectors and parent views. Only 5% of participants noted a disadvantage to the child which was the feeling of failure.

The vast majority of participants said the statement that best reflected their view on risky play in child development as “it is crucial to fine tune motor skills, practice life skills and for experiential learning’, while minority feel it is not at all important for overall child development.

4.4 Evaluation of method
100% response rate was achieved, as stipulated by course regulations. All questionnaires produced valid information with clear data that answered the objectives of my aim.

4.5 Conclusion
As illustrated in my graphs there is a vast difference of attitudes, values, understanding and implementation of risky play across EYPs. EYPs need to be educated on the definition of risky-play, how to access and implement it in a safe way for the holistic development of all children.
Chapter 5: Discussion

5.1 Introduction
Confusion about safety and risk management in risky play is widespread.

5.2 Risk management: To examine the early years’ practitioner’s knowledge, attitudes and experiences of risky play.
A high degree of EYPs agree there is an element of risky play involved in all play types this conflicts with Heseltine (1995) and Ball in Thom et al (2007) who demonstrate the negative effect of risk adverse culture, simplifying and standardising playground equipment to the point of no play value or opportunities for challenging play. However further findings support their theory as 55% of participants agree it is very unimportant or unimportant to reduce risky play for safety purposes this is important as it highlights the lack of understanding of what risky play is that risk control of equipment and simplifying equipment can eliminate risk.

Vast majorities of participant’s services are running the maximum adult to child ratios, this is a limit not an ideal, with the larges percent of risky play being implementation on small group basis reduced levels of supervision risks the safety of the children whom are not involved in the risky play, this concurs with Wilkinson (2015) that environmental factors impact children’s opportunities but goes against European safety standards which often need to be met for insurance cover however, not enough research has been carried out on the subject of risk implementation specifically for early years services to identify staff ratios in different areas of child development and activity implementation.

Importance of risky play saw a large divide in the opinions of EYPs, Stephenson (2003) identified that children’s desire to participate in physical challenges was fulfilled more by the attitudes of the teachers facilitating risky play rather than the equipment, this divide further evident from my findings at opposite ends of the scale of importance this is important as implementation of activities and children’s level of participation effect what the children take from their play, roll out of training for practitioners would allow them study types of risky play, ways to implement and support play and ease fears of injury and liability.

Over half of participants feel they provide adequate provision for risky play a comment of ‘Clinical’ outdoor area, which by its very nature is a non-clinical and natural area. John and Wheway (2004) identify the importance of getting dirty in positive childhood experiences and prevention would restrict play. Cultural change that see’s children expected to engage in play which is messy work and value of play recognised through policy reform where parents are responsible for ensuring children are dressed for outdoor activities in all weathers building immune systems and enabling children participate in quality play experiences in early years settings without fear of getting in trouble for getting dirty.

Activities identified by participants on what constitutes risky play identified a wide range of attitudes and a lack of knowledge with results displaying a lack of agreement on what constitutes risk in play, which backs up Wheway (2008) that clear guidance has not been provided. This is a crucial finding because until a clear understanding of risky play and how to implement it is reached then children cannot benefit from the full child development potential that has been identified as being crucial to child development and having social benefits in later life (Crooks & De Buis, 2011).

5.3 Child Development: To explore the benefits of risky play in the development of 3-5year olds and how early years practitioners implement risky play.
A small percentage of participants do not promote risky play a small percentage saw no advantage in risk taking behaviours, the vast majority promote it outdoors identifying cognitive development as a main advantage and some encourage it at home by informing parents none of the participants encourage risky play indoors, parental worries are common but these experiences are required for child development Willoughby (2014). This is significant as preschools are being supported by government funding to provide a high standard of early years care and education to all children aged 3-5 and without a clear set of guild-lines on risky play with definition, ideas of what risks are suitable for preschool age children, how to implement risky play and how to support children of different developmental levels to engage in risky play with examples is needed to inform practitioners of their role and responsibilities and reduce the gap in what
is accessible to children in preschools nationwide, there will continue to be a vast difference in implementation
techniques which can hinder children’s development.

EYP’s approach to a parent who does not want their child to participate varied vastly, most participants would use is
to explain the importance of these opportunities to the child’s development and carry on with activities and would
not carry on unknown to the parent exclusion of a child was given as an approach, John and Wheway (2004) identified
over cautious fears for safety of children with disabilities causing exclusion from play provision, Sanddsetter (2009)
agrees the benefits of risky play need to be highlighted but there is no recommendations on how to proceed
afterwards. EYPs main concern was of the safety of the children. Recommendations and information for parents on
types of play to educate them and teach them of EYPs role in promoting all types of play would help them identify the
benefits and encourage them to allow their child engage in risky play outside the preschool environment and create
continuity.

Risky play implemented by participants is mostly in a structured manner with close supervision and turn taking.
Brussoni et al (2012) suggests children should be kept as safe as necessary rather than as safe as possible as they
need the opportunity to build on, develop and master skills with sufficient challenge to prevent boredom. John and
Wheway (2004) believe minor injuries are important in positive childhood experiences. However, European safety
standards that are being implemented are irrelevant to childcare settings and inappropriate where providing risk is
necessary, Willoughby (2014) believes too many limits, restrictions and not long enough time outdoors is hazardous
to child development and that results of studies on attitudes towards risky play should have implications on preschools
and EYPs should provide support and inspire risky play in preschool. This will be affected by staffs ability to support
risky play on maximum staff ratios.

5.4 Evaluation of method
A quantitive method of research was used and was very effective in collecting data about the participants opinions,
views and implementation for this small scale research project if it was on a larger scale for a larger research project
a qualitative method may be more appropriate to gather in depth knowledge of EYPs experiences, attitudes and values
towards risky play in early years. The quantitive method was time and cost effective method of data collection and
findings were easily compared and reported

5.5 Conclusion
The aim was to identify views of Offaly’s EYPs on Risk Play in child development of 3-5 year olds, this showed vast
differences across the sector there is a need for further research as risk play to this point has been researched mostly
in relation to public areas and attitudes of parents and children rather than early years professionals. There is a need
for policy and cultural change in managing risk in play provision to aid the development of children, an assessment
and implementation guide on risky play for parents and carers would be beneficial, I recommend these changes are
implemented and risk benefit assessments replace risk assessment and risk illumination procedures currently used.

Child development for Irish students book written by a level 5 tutor in a college in Ireland didn’t even identify risky
play as a factor in any area of child development. The need to conduct this research is evident from the range of
findings gathered, the literature reviews was based on those closest associated to EYPs n as it was not based on EYPs.
Further research on the subject would lead to more informed findings that would help identify the areas of
developmental need within the early years sector in Ireland as previous literature was from other countries who’s
culture and practices differ from Irish methods, guidance is required for good implementation of risky play.
Appendix 1: Covering letter with consent form.

Dear Early years’ practitioner,

My name is Irene Corcoran. I am currently undertaking my final year of my degree in Early years’ care and education in Athlone Institute of Technology. As part of my course, I must complete a research project. I have chosen to examine the early years’ practitioner’s knowledge, attitudes and experiences of risky play and risk management and the benefits of risky play in the child development of 3-5 year olds and how early years practitioners implement risky play. My research is being supervised by Dr Vincent O’Connor; a lecturer in the department of lifelong learning.

I will be distributing questionnaires to early years practitioners to gain an understanding of their knowledge, opinions and implementation of Risky play. I would be extremely grateful if you would participate in my research, participation is entirely voluntary, anonymous and participants may withdraw from the process at any point, if they wish.

The information I gather will be used only by myself for my thesis. I may use quotes to highlight my findings however, no names or identifying characteristics will be used. The anonymity of all participants will be preserved at all times. All data collected will be destroyed on or before February 1st 2017.

Questionnaires will take no more than ten minutes to complete. If you have any questions or queries please contact me on 0879066089. Thank you very much for your time and assistance.

Yours truly,

Irene Corcoran.

Irene Corcoran.
Appendix 2: Pilot Questionnaire

1. To what extent do you agree or disagree with this statement, please tick one box

   “There is a certain element of risk involved in all types of play”

   Strongly disagree [ ] disagree [ ] neutral [ ] agree [ ] strongly agree [ ]

2. What percentage /number of staff in your service/room have training in
   A) Manual handling _____
   B) Level 5 in first aid _____
   C) How many staff have you in your service/room _____

3. What are your current staff to child ratios? _______

4. To what extent do you agree early years professionals need to provide risky play as part of child development? Please tick one

   Very unimportant [ ] Unimportant [ ] Neutral [ ] Important [ ] Very important [ ]

5. To what extent do you agree early years professionals need to reduce risky play for safety purposes? Please tick one

   Very unimportant [ ] Unimportant [ ] Neutral [ ] Important [ ] Very important [ ]

6. What level of importance do you place on risky play in the early years setting? Please tick one

   Very unimportant [ ] Unimportant [ ] Neutral [ ] Important [ ] Very important [ ]

7. How do you manage risky play? Please tick one

   Individual activity [ ] paired activity [ ] small group [ ] large group [ ] whole class [ ]
8. Do you believe early years practitioners can support risky play on a ratio of 1:11?

Absolutely Not (never) [ ] occasionally (monthly) [ ] sometimes (weekly) [ ] most of the time (3 or 4 times in the week) [ ] Yes of course (Daily) [ ]

9. Do you feel you provide adequate provision for children to engage in risky play?

Yes [ ] No [ ] Unsure [ ] other please specify ________________________________

10. How do you introduce Risky play to children in your service? Please tick one

Informally by allowing the children access it during free play [ ]

Structured using close supervision and turn taking [ ]

Introduce the child to the equipment, give instruction then allow them access it freely

As instructed as part of an activity [ ]

Provoked by instrumental goal directed behaviour [ ]

Or other, please specify ________________________________

_______________________________________________________________________

11. Have you ever assessed the risky play opportunities in your service? Yes [ ] No [ ]

12. (A) Please tick ✓ all/any area you consider to be covered by the term risky play and

(B) mark those you deem too risky with an X

Any that are not deemed risky play can be left blank:

Low rise climbing frames [ ] regular climbing frame [ ] standing on child size furniture [ ]

Playing on slippy surfaces (wet timber/frosty cement) [ ] Horse play/ rough & tumble [ ]
Weather elements (playing outside in snow or with ice) [ ] Buntus/PE [ ] Swings [ ]
Slide [ ] sea saw [ ] running [ ] bikes with stabilisers [ ] ride ons [ ] football [ ]
Other please specify _____________________________________________________________

13. Please tick any/all areas where you promote risky play for children using your service
I don’t encourage it [ ] I encourage it Indoors [ ] encouraged outdoors [ ] encouraged for
at home by sharing information with parents [ ]

14. Have you ever looked up ways to provide risky play opportunities? No [ ] yes [ ]
If yes where did you find the best information ________________________________

15. If you have parents who don’t want their child to get dirty, run fast on the cement, 
16. jumping off a step, play in the rain wearing waterproofs, climb a small tree, (and you
have detailed the importance of these things on child development and your
curriculum) would you be influenced by the parent’s
personality/opinions/views/comments.
Please number 1 = most likely to do. 5 = least likely to do, blank = I would not.
Continue with these activities [ ]
Explain the importance of these activities again [ ]
Stop these activities altogether [ ]
Avoid these activities when that child is attending [ ]
Carry out these activities at a different time of day when the parent is less likely to see [ ]

17. How often have you removed a piece of equipment (that was not faulty) form your
setting because of the level of potential risk involved? Annually [ ] Monthly [ ] weekly
[ ] Other please specify ______________if you have not please move on to question

18. Was this decision based on an incident that happened [ ] or Risk Assessment [ ]

19. Who recommended the removal of the equipment? your own decision [ ] health, safety and welfare inspectors [ ] preschool inspector [ ] Staff concern [ ] parental concern [ ] dynamics of the group [ ] other please specify ______________________

20. What are the main advantages of risky play in your opinion?

_______________________________________________________________________

21. What are the main disadvantages of risky play in your opinion?

_________________________________________________________________________

22. Which of these statement best reflects your opinion on how important is it to provide risky play opportunities for overall child development? [ ]
   (1) Not at all important, the children will develop with or without these provisions.
   (2) Not as important as its made out to be, all children learn in different ways.
   (3) It is nice to provide the opportunity they may not participate in risky play at home.
   (4) It is somewhat important to enable children to develop physically and cognitively.
   (5) It is crucial to fine tune motor skills, practice life skills and for experiential learning.
Appendix 3: Sample participant Consent form.

I agree to take part in the research project on Risky play in the form of a questionnaire carried out by Irene Corcoran from Athlone Institute of Technology. I understand the research is being conducted as part of the degree in Early years’ care and education and will be used as research, that my name or any other identifying information will not be disclosed and is entirely confidential. I also understand that I may withdraw from the process at any point, I wish.

Signed: ______________________  Date _____ / _____ / 17.
Bibliography


