



## PHYSICAL ACTIVITY FACT SHEET #1

# CHALLENGING AND ADVENTUROUS PLAY

Children love stimulating play, adventure, thrills and challenge and need to be given the chance to 'have a go'. Children need to experience opportunities involving calculated risks, and to be 'extended' physically, mentally and emotionally. Challenging and adventurous play provides for these needs and should be included as part of a balanced play program. Getting the right balance requires knowledge of children's development, observations of children at play to assess their level of skill, and, time taken to talk to children about their play needs.

When planning and conducting challenging and adventurous play activities the supervision and safety of children must be ensured at all times. Play environments and activities should offer challenge and risk taking without placing children 'at risk' of danger or harm. Comprehensive risk assessments, identifying risks and control measures, should be completed prior to any activity being conducted. Risk assessments for all excursions must be completed as a regulatory requirement

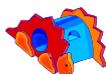
### **CHALLENGING AND ADVENTUROUS ACTIVITIES**

The following examples of challenging and adventurous play activities include those that can be planned at your service or for children to participate in as part of an excursion. Many challenging and adventurous activities occur outdoors. If your outdoor play space is restrictive it may be necessary to visit a local park on a regular basis.

#### Obstacle courses

An obstacle course should provide for a wide range of movement. Opportunities for swinging, climbing, hanging, balancing, crawling, leaping, running and jumping may be included. Obstacle courses may be designed around fixed playground equipment with the following additional items:

- Tyres – for stepping in and out
- Ladder, cargo nets – for climbing
- Gym tumbling and high jump mats – for safe landing areas
- Planks of wood on tyres, rope bridges – for balancing
- Carpet bags, material/hessian – tunnels for crawling



### Rock climbing

Rock climbing is a challenging and exciting activity for children. An excursion can be planned to an indoor rock climbing centre or alternatively, rock climbing walls can be hired and delivered to your site for a great incursion.

### Bike riding/scooters

Biking is a popular activity for children and can be incorporated as an incursion activity during vacation care, allowing children opportunities to develop bike riding skills such as starting, stopping, braking, riding in pairs and riding in a straight line. Educators can use intentional teaching practices to ensure children are aware of bike safety such as:

- Always wearing a bike helmet
- Always being seen – wear bright clothing, lights, reflectors
- Being alert at all times especially near driveways, intersections and laneways
- Following all rules for road and dual path use (set up the bike riding area with road signs and use witches hats to increase the challenge of the path)
- Maintaining your bike in a safe condition (e.g. brakes, tyres, etc)



### Roller/in-line skating

Roller skating is an activity that has been enjoyed by children and adults for many years. In more recent times, in-line skates have also proven popular. Roller skating rinks are the best place to take part in this activity, so look for one in your local area. Extra diligent supervision needs to be taken particularly if you have children in your group who have never roller skated before. Ice skating is another opportunity for developing these skills.

### Climbing trees

Trees offer children climbing challenges that commercial play equipment may not. Tree climbing is a great activity that can assist with children's physical development including balance and upper body strength. Climbing trees, balancing on logs and swinging from branches can help children build muscle tone as well as play a part in developing confidence in their ability. Good climbing trees have branches down low so small children can reach to start climbing. Safe climbing trees are those with strong rather than brittle branches that will definitely hold children in the air as they play. The best climbing trees also have long branches that extend out horizontally so there is room for children to sit and talk, wait for Robin Hood or a panther or sleep for a hundred years or.....whatever their imagination desires. A comprehensive risk assessment and direct supervision are essential to this activity.



Hughes, T. (n.d.). *Climbing Trees*. Retrieved December 2012, from Word constructions:  
[www.wordconstructions.com.au/articles/general/climbtrees.html](http://www.wordconstructions.com.au/articles/general/climbtrees.html)