

Mind the Gap – Perceptions of Active Energetic Play or ‘Risky’ Play in the Child Care Setting

Early Years Physical Literacy Research Team
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What is Physical Literacy for the Early Years?



Motivation,

confidence,

competence

to move for a lifetime

(Whitehead, 2010)

Is Risky Play more than this?

What is 'Risky' Play?



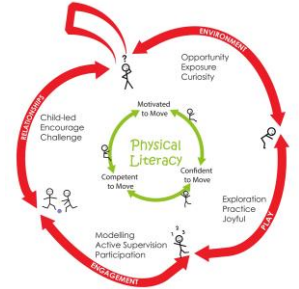
risky
energetic
real
play
dizzy
adventurous
active

Why Explore Risky Play?

Three pillars: resources, education, and policy

Policy Revision 2011-2012

- Worked with a province-wide team to develop a policy case to increase physical activity in child care
- Success! Accreditation Standards were revised to include physical literacy guidelines
- Result: Alberta is a leader in physical literacy standards for child care



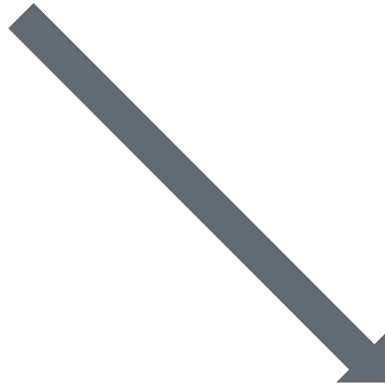
However – A Gap Exists...

Opportunities

Accreditation Guidelines
require ECEs to:

- Provide physical activity
- Limit sedentary behaviour
- Promote physical literacy

Active Energetic Play



'Perceived' Restrictions

- Risky
- Inappropriate play spaces
- Health and Safety policies
- Licensing regulations
- Liability

*Motivation, competence,
& confidence is
compromised*

Methods and Results



Overview

Objective: To better understand perspectives and barriers to providing active energetic/risky play.

Method: Online surveys, focus groups, leadership team, literature review

Respondents: Parents (n=370), ECEs (n=373), licensing officers, Health, and Owners/Directors.

Topics: Definition of risky play, structured adult-led risky play activities, unstructured child-led risky play activities, supervision

Mind the Gap–Activities Conducted

The purpose of this project was twofold:

- 1) to explore potential gaps or inconsistencies by consulting a wide range of stakeholders and;
- 2) to develop a policy proposal to be submitted to the Ministries of Children's Services and Alberta Health that acknowledges, supports, and enables energetic active play in licensed and approved child care settings across Alberta.



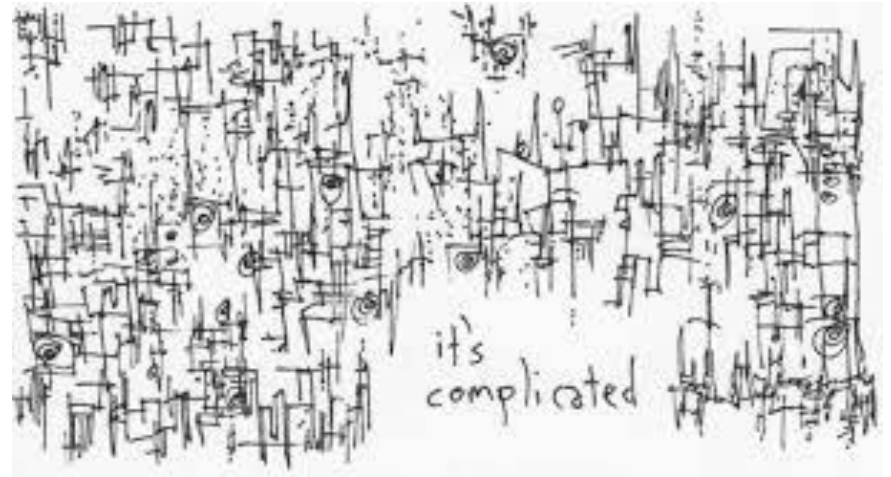
Mind the Gap–Focus Groups

The data were thematically analyzed into four general themes:

- a. Current practice of ECEs in the field including benefits of active energetic play.
- b. Mandates of Child Care Licensing and Health and Safety relating to active energetic play.
- c. Issues and challenges related to providing active energetic play.
- d. Solutions to ensure all preschool children have access to active energetic play in all child care settings.
- e. Active, engaging supervision

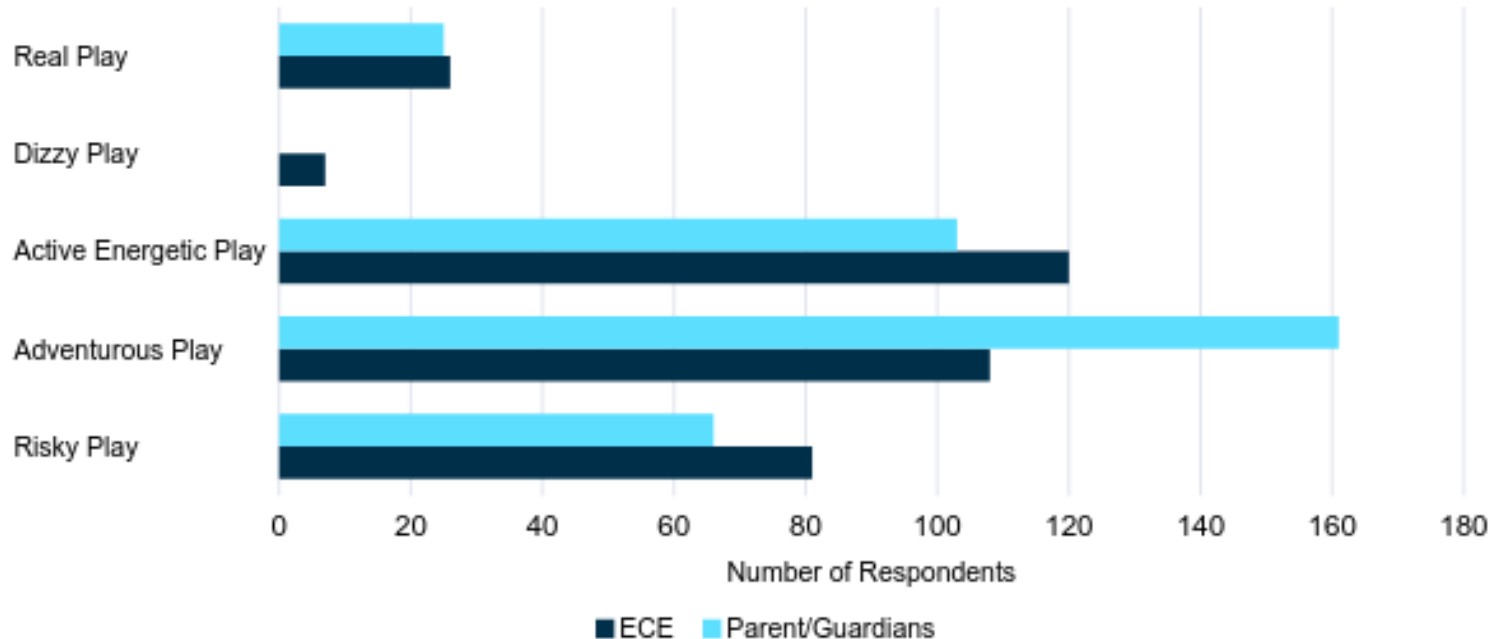
Web of Confusion

- Autonomy versus interpretation
- Confusion on both sides
- Restricts opportunities



Mind the Gap—How to Define ‘Risky Play’?

What is the best name for play that is thrilling and exciting and where there is a risk of physical injury?



Moving Forward...



Development of Protocol



Does a gap between policy and practice exist?

Yes

1. Education
 2. Supervision
 3. Communication
 4. Comfort Levels
- Participants agreed that a standard protocol could help to clear up confusion
 - To be developed by all stakeholders

Thank you

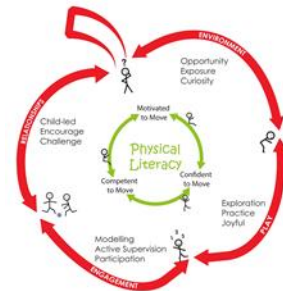
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