



## Woodland Play Sessions

### Risk Benefit Assessment

Subject of Risk Assessment:	<b>Rope Play</b>
Description of activities, location and equipment	<p>Rope swings (existing or set up by staff or participants)</p> <p>Rope bridges (set up by staff or participants, including slack lines, postman’s walk and similar).</p> <p>Rope play, including holding up dens and structures or helping climb steep slopes.</p> <p>Typically this is in the woodland play site although it may also be located in the Community Centre garden</p>
Our approach to risk	<p>Gargunnock Playgroup recognises that all risks cannot be reduced to nil, therefore this risk assessment prioritises the significant risks. Significant risks are those which pose risk of serious injury, chronic injury, disability or death, or risks that are overly common in interrupting normal work and play. For all activities, our staff will dynamically assesses risks and put in place control measures and record as required, but always within agreed and recorded RBAs. Concerns, changes in risk management practice or minor injuries that are deemed by staff to be significant should be reported to the playgroup committee.</p> <p>This RBA should be read in conjunction with Gargunnock Playgroup’s Health and Safety Policy, other relevant Risk Benefit Assessments and our Outdoor Play Policy.</p>
Benefits	<p>Learning to make risk judgements and manage risk for themselves.</p> <p>Balance, co-ordination and general physical literacy will be developed by constructing and then using simple rope activities.</p> <p>Group working and social skills will be developed by participants, including turn taking and socially supporting each other.</p> <p>Learn about materials (strength, flexibility, knot tying etc) and tree types (strength, flexibility and rooting)</p> <p>Engagement with natural environment.</p> <p>Builds resilience and then confidence through success and challenge.</p> <p>Fun, achievement and physical enjoyment of the activity.</p>
Who will be at risk	<p>Children</p> <p>Parents</p> <p>Staff</p> <p>Members of the public</p>
Local factors affecting risks or controls	<p>Area used for recreation, dog walking</p> <p>Abilities and experience of attending children</p>

Potential Hazards:	Precautions and Controls used to reduce the likelihood of the risk occurring or the severity of the risk
*All staff members hold a current first aid qualification and a first aid kit is always available.	
<p>* Falls :</p> <p>a rope may break or snap or a knot may fail causing a person to fall to the ground leading to significant injury</p> <p>a branch may snap, bend or uproot causing a person to fall to the ground leading to significant injury</p> <p>a branch may fall landing on a person leading to significant injury</p> <p>A fall onto the ground, landing on sharp or protruding objects may lead to significant injury</p>	<p>During Woodland Play Sessions ropes will be used to tie up tarpaulins for shelter and to secure equipment.</p> <p>Ropes will also be used to enhance play, such as making fishing rods, stick men etc.</p> <p>Ropes may be used to construct ropes swings or be secured to assist climbing up slopes.</p> <p>Rope swings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Will be constructed by staff and Participants, with the staff member undertaking a Dynamic Risk Assessment of the tree, the rope and attachment (knot) and immediate surroundings such as floor and obstacles.</li> <li>• Participants feet on rope swings will be under the head height of the Participants at maximum swing/elevation.</li> <li>• Good group briefing and management by LTL staff, including teaching to step off not fall off and vigilance for others entering swing area or overly zealous swinging.</li> <li>• Vigilance and zero tolerance of wrapping the rope around any part of the body.</li> </ul> <p>Ropes to support climbing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Will be constructed by staff and participants, with the staff member undertaking a Dynamic Risk Assessment of the trees, the ropes and attachments (knots) and immediate surroundings such as floor and obstacles (particularly at bottom of a slope).</li> <li>• Particular care to be taken if the ropes are loose ended and vigilance to prevent rope being wrapped around</li> </ul>
* Rope burn	Heights of all suspended activities will be limited and never above head height of participants.
<p>* Collisions :</p> <p>participants or members of the public may collide with a participant swinging on a rope or participant could collide with a tree or sharp or protruding objects such as branches leading to serious injury</p>	<p>Any ropes used for such play will be visually inspected by staff for damage before use, using common sense. Appropriate quality and thickness of ropes will be assessed in relation to the activity, eg, ropes used for weight bearing activities must be able to support weight.</p> <p>Any area a participant could conceivably fall should be cleared of hazards that could lead to significant injury.</p> <p>Staff should be aware of and use for guidance –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Forestry Commission guidance on "<a href="#">Rope Swings, dens, tree houses and fire</a>"</li> <li>• <a href="#">Children's Tree Swings</a> – a Guide to Good Practice. London Play, Natural England, Monkey Do.</li> </ul>
* Participants may walk into ropes leading to trip or fall and significant injury	

## Precedents and Comparisons

Many examples of children and adults creating their own rope swings, in simple and challenging locations. Children have access to a tyre swing, ropes and pulleys in the community centre garden, these have been used and played with safely for many years.

Scout and Boys Brigade and Girlguiding movements have a long history of using ropes with children and young people as rope swings, bridges and to support structures and dens.

Learning Through Landscapes has used rope swings in schools and with young children in woods with great success and no accidents.

Many playgrounds for children incorporate swings, balance beams or ropes and climbing support with ropes.

We have used information from

The Forestry Commission (Rope Swings, dens, tree houses and fire),

London Play (Children's Tree Swings – a Guide to Good Practice)

Grounds for Learning (Risk Benefit Assessments)

Play Safety Forum (Managing Risk in Play Provision)

to inform our assessment process

## Judgement

The use of simple, low rope play as outlined above presents low hazards if undertaken carefully and Dynamically Risk Assessed.

Good management of the area (floor and adjacent) will remove most injury mechanisms.

Particular care to prevent ropes wrapping around participants should be exercised.

The use of ropes is a valuable and enjoyable experience that Woodland Play Sessions should provide to many participants.