Risk Benefit Assessment

This template will help ABFS perform on-going Risk Benefit Assessment (RBA) as part of our risk management strategy. We can assess a range of risky activities and conditions in this format. RBA demonstrates our commitment to risk management and is an important tool for staff. In addition to an overall RBA of our program activities and site we will keep a separate log of daily site scans. On-going risk management keeps everyone healthy and safe!

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| **Risky Play** (Activity or Experience | **Benefits** (Activity or Experience) | **Hazard** | **Decision** | **Action Taken** | **Level of Risk** (Before/After |
| Animal Encounter/tracking | S-E: Conflict resolution. Formation of values, respect, trustC: Local knowledge and Identification Development.Nature AppreciationIntrinsic Motivation G-M:Habituation (concentration, tuning out distracting info) | Encounter with a wild animal that could cause harm. Handling wild animal fur, scat, bones.Minor Injury- trips, bumps, bruises during activity. | Continue with adjustments and monitor the situation. | -Be bear aware -Practice bear encounter drills. -Sing bear chants -Wear bear bells-Practice Leave No Trace principles-Respect animals and no feeding of animals- Adults carry bear spray-Sanitize and wash hands after handling animal parts-Move slowly-Stay together | Medium/Low |
| Buoy Swing/Rope Ladder/Hammock | S-E: Conflict resolution, sharing. Cooperation, understanding others ideas. Ability to read others C: Intrinsic Motivation. Decision Making. G-M: Refinement of skills over time. Pushing Comfort Zone. Sensory Integration (perceptual) takes information we receive from our 5 senses, organizes it, and responds appropriately. Risk-taking (physical dexterity and mastery). Vestibular hand eye coordination and being able to balance and spatial awareness personal space. | Minor: Bumps, bruises, scrapsMajor: broken bone, head injury, concussion | Continue with adjustments and monitor the situation. | - Supervised- One student at a time- One direction- Wait in line behind indicated perimeter- Remove potential hazards like stumps and rocks | Medium/Medium |
| Fire/Use of the Kelly Kettle | S-E: Identify, express, regulate emotions. Emotional regulationC: Higher Order Thinking, Critical Thinking, and Problem SolvingG-M: Mindfulness and awareness of one's body and breath. Risk Taking | Smoke inhalationSplinters, Cuts, scratchesBurnsFire Spread | Continue with adjustments and monitor the situation. | - Follow guidelines for safe perimeters when fire is present.- Before lighting a fire, have a safety meeting to go over rules.- Adult supervision at all times- Bucket of water and fire blanket close by- No loose clothing or hair- Use of proper materials to burn | Medium/Low |
| Foraging/Plant identification | S-E: Formation of values, respect, trust. Connection to Nature/landC: Deep Knowledge and understanding of activity. Cultural Appreciation. Intrinsic MotivationG-M: Sensory Integration (perceptual) takes information we receive from our 5 senses, organizes it, and responds appropriately. Nutrition | Minor injury- walking in the forest, slip, trip, fallBites from insects in the forestMajor Injury- rash, poisoning, allergy to plants | Continue with adjustments and monitor the situation. | - No mushrooms- Learn to identify plants, bring field guides for backup- Err on the side of caution- Wash all edibles before eating- Don’t pick where possible pesticides or chemical spraying | Medium/Low |
| Open Water encounters | S-E: Identify, express, regulate emotions. C: Nature AppreciationG-M: Mindfulness and awareness of one's body and breath | Fall into water, Slips, trips, fallsScraps and CutsHypothermia | Continue with adjustments and monitor the situation. | - Move Slow- Bring extra warm clothes- No deep water exposure  | Medium/Low |
| Playing in snow/on ice | S-E: Managing expectations. Self-confidence, perseverance, grit. Ability to read othersC: Eco-literacy. Imagination and PlanningG-M: Pushing Comfort Zone. Endurance. Using body as a means of self-expression/communication | Hypothermia, Frostbite, ColdFall through IceTrips, Slips, Falls, Head injury | Continue with adjustments and monitor the situation. | - Wear proper gear and have extra gear on hand- Move Slow- Don’t use ice pond during warm temps- Stay together- Keep moving to stay warm | Low/Low |
| Sledding | S-E:Perspective-taking, empathy, kindness. Conflict resolution, sharingC: Intrinsic MotivationG-M:Risk-taking (physical dexterity and mastery). Pushing Comfort Zone. Endurance | Minor Injury: Bumps, bruisesMajor Injury: Collision with another person/treeHead Injury | Continue with adjustments and monitor the situation. | - Wear Helmet- One person per sled- One person on sledding hill at a time- Clear sledding hill of any debris | Medium/Low |
| Stick Play | S-E: Building relationships with others and self identity. Formation of values, respect, trust. Identify, express, regulate emotions. Cooperation, understanding others ideas. Conflict resolution, sharing. Managing expectations. Ability to read othersC: Higher Order Thinking, Critical Thinking, and Problem Solving. Deep Knowledge and understanding of activityG-M: Vestibular hand eye coordination and being able to balance and spatial awareness personal space. Mindfulness and awareness of one's body and breath  | Minor Injury: Scrapes, cuts, deep, bruises, and bumpsEye Injury | Continue with adjustments and monitor the situation | - Practice safety circle- Sticks will be pointed down when we aren’t able to do a safety circle- Sticks can’t be larger than the child- Only one stick per child- Only walking when we are holding our sticks | Medium/Medium |
| Tool Use | S-E: Self-confidence, perseverance, gritC: Decision Making. Deep Knowledge and understanding of activityG-M: Risk-taking (physical dexterity and mastery). Refinement of skills over time. Vestibular hand eye coordination and being able to balance and spatial awareness personal space. Habituation (concentration, tuning out distracting info) | Minor Injury: Scrapes, cuts, deep cuts, bruises, and bumps | Continue with adjustments and monitor the situation. | - 1:1 supervision adult:child only allowed- Before starting tool use have child repeat rules- Tools are not toys- Safe distance from other children- Explain proper tool use | High/Medium |
| Walking on roadways/Crossing busy streets | S-E: Managing expectations.C: Decision MakingG-M: Sensory Integration (perceptual) takes information we receive from our 5 senses, organizes it, and responds appropriately. | Minor Injury: Slips, Trips, Falls, bumps, bruises, minor cuts and scrapesCollision with moving vehicles (bikes and cars)Head Injury | Continue with no adjustments and monitor the situation. | - Go slow- Do a site check of roadway- Stay with group- Adult acts as crossing guard when walking across a busy street-Stay on sidewalk when available- During winter months wear reflective gear when outside in dark | Low/Low |
| Walking on trails/Exploring woods | S-E: Managing expectations. Cooperation, understanding others ideasC: Eco-literacy. Imagination and Planning G-M: Endurance. Pushing Comfort Zone. Vestibular hand eye coordination and being able to balance and spatial awareness personal space  | Minor Injury: Slips, Trips, Falls, bumps, bruises, minor cuts and scrapesLost childInsect bites | Continue with no adjustments and monitor the situation. | - Go slow- Do a trail check- Wear footwear appropriate for trail walking- Head counts, especially when switching direction or before leaving- Stay with group no running ahead and falling behind- Mark boundary of woods with bright fabric  | Low/Low |

Benefit - the positive outcomes of the experience / planned activities

Hazard - the potential for something to cause harm

Risk - the likelihood of it happening

**Domains**

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| **Social-Emotional (S-E)** | **Cognitive (C)** | **Gross Motor (G-M)** |
| * Building relationships with others and self identity
* Formation of values, respect, trust
* Identify, express, regulate emotions
* Cooperation, understanding others ideas
* Perspective-taking, empathy, kindness
* Conflict resolution, sharing
* Managing expectations
* Self-confidence, perseverance, grit
* Ability to read others
 | * Decision Making
* Higher Order Thinking, Critical Thinking, and Problem Solving
* Deep Knowledge and understanding of activity
* Eco-literacy
* Imagination and Planning
* Cultural Appreciation
* Local knowledge and Identification Development
* Nature Appreciation
* Intrinsic Motivation
 | * Refinement of skills over time
* Endurance
* Mindfulness and awareness of one's body and breath
* Pushing Comfort Zone
* Sensory Integration (perceptual) takes information we receive from our 5 senses, organizes it, and responds appropriately.
* Habituation (concentration, tuning out distracting info)
* Vestibular hand eye coordination and being able to balance and spatial awareness personal space
* Nutrition
* Risk-taking (physical dexterity and mastery)
* Using body as a means of self-expression/communication
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Simpson, M. and Simpson, K., 2017. *FSFNS Experience Risk Benefit Assessment*. [online] Fsforestschool.com. Available at: <https://fsforestschool.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/FSFNS-Experience-Risk-Benefit-Assessment.pdf> [Accessed 16 May 2021].

Definitions

**Risks:** The significant adverse outcomes that may arise from the site, program, activity, or experience. In everyday life and in standard risk management, risks areoften seen only as negative, yet we believe that risks can have upsides. They may create opportunities for learning and development. They may excite, motivate, or engage children. And they reflect the reality of the world in which we all live, which is full of uncertainty, adventure, and possibility.

**Decision:** This is the assessor’s conclusion following a risk-benefit assessment. Here are examples of decisions you can make:

• Continue with no adjustments and monitor the situation.

• Continue with specific adjustments and continue to monitor the situation.

• Cease all programs or activities until work can be carried out and further assessments can be made.

**Benefits:** These are the specific, positive things that children—and possibly others—gain from a program/experience. These include social, physical,emotional, educational, and psychological benefits. Benefits can help justify the inclusion of risky aspects of your program.

\*Definitions provided from Risk Benefit Assessment for Outdoor Play: A Canadian Toolkit by Ottawa Child & Nature Alliance of Canada.