

# Risk Management in Early Childhood Education & Care

## ***Risk does not have to be a dirty word!***

Handled properly, it can alert organisations to problems and also drive sustainability.

There are two sides to risk: :

- Risk that organisations are comfortable with and want to run with
- Risks that are necessary to take to grow and develop and support long term sustainability

The secret is running a balance between the two and knowing which risks are worth taking! So risk does not have to be a dirty word!

## **Reflective Questions to consider within your service:**

- What policies and procedures are in place to support effective risk management—both operational and governance
- Do the educators have ongoing access to these policies and procedures?
- Do the educators have a clear understanding of the importance of compliance of these policies and procedures
- When were these policies and procedures last reviewed and updated in consultation with the key stakeholders
- Do educators engage with children about appropriate risk and challenge particularly in outdoor play?
- Do educators and families collaborate to support appropriate risk management
- Is the service in open dialogue with the regulatory authorities in respect of risk management strategies
- Does the service mitigate the risk by sticking to a plan of action.

**RISK IS INTEGRAL TO EVERYDAY PRACTICE IN ECEC SETTINGS, MANAGEMENT OF THE RISK IS ESSENTIAL AND IS EVERYONES RESPONSIBILITY**

*Highly involved children (and adults) operate at the limit of their capacities, leading to changed ways of responding and understanding leading to deep level learning.*

*(adapted from Laevers 1994)*

Children have a strong sense of wellbeing:

### ***This is evident, for example, when children:***

- Show increasing independence and competence in care and safety for themselves and others.
- Negotiate play spaces to ensure the safety and wellbeing of themselves and others.
- Manipulate equipment and manage tools with increasing competence and skill
- Demonstrate spatial awareness and orient themselves, moving around and through their environments confidently and safely

### ***Educators promote this learning, for example, when they:***

- Provide opportunities for children to gain skills and become physically competent
- Promote children's cognitive development through supporting and encouraging analysis and decision making
- Make collaborative professional judgements about acceptable risk and communicate to all stakeholders
- Regularly evaluate the opportunities against the consequences and document the evaluation outcomes.

