

Little Seeds Nature Preschool

Basic Safety Awareness Skills Acknowledgement Form

We love that Little Seeds Nature Preschool is an immersive outdoor program that keeps social emotional learning and development at the forefront! We encourage our children to explore nature in all seasons and habitats. We welcome the benefits of children engaging in risky play and encourage messy, active, and exploratory learning! We ask that families come to us with an appreciation for risky play and an understanding of the basic safety skills we require students to have at Little Seeds.

Please review, agree, and sign our 'Basic Safety Awareness Skills' for preschoolers' form. Highlighted in this form you will note many aspects of safety awareness as it closely relates to our approach and understanding of risky play.

What is risky play?

Risky play is described as thrilling and exciting play, that may involve challenges, heights, speed, tools, rough and tumble play, and testing limits. Children have an evolutionary need to engage in free, unstructured, exploratory play outdoors. Six categories of risks that seem to engage children everywhere in their play:

- **Great Heights:** Children climb trees and other structures to scary heights, from which they gain a birds-eye view of the world and the thrilling feeling of *I did it!*.
- **Rapid Speeds:** Children swing on trees, ropes, or swings; slide on sleds, skis, or slides; run down hills, and other activities fast enough to produce the thrill of almost, but not quite losing control.
- **Tools & Equipment:** Prepared and supported at an age-appropriate level children utilize knives, kitchen utensils, basic tools, and farm equipment (where work and play combine). There is, of course, great satisfaction in being trusted to handle such tools, but there is also thrill in learning how to safely control them.
- **Natural Elements:** Children love to play and interact in and around bodies of water, in ice, snow, and mud, near fire, and across diverse landscapes with varying degrees of challenge while exploring.
- **Rough and Tumble:** Children everywhere enjoy overcoming challenges with skill, such as chasing one another around or wrestling playfully. Learning how their bodies move quickly in space and in relation to a friend requires practice, consent from one another, and check ins while playing.
- **Wide Open Spaces:** Children play hide and seek and enjoy venturing off into new spaces and being given the opportunity to roam. At Little Seeds students must always stay within sight and sound of their teachers but are able to venture with increased distance separating themselves from adults.

Why is risky play important?

Children play intuitively and are constantly exploring different ways to play. Some do this with caution, while others continually seek out new challenges. Either way, a child's right to explore, play and discover is something that as caregivers we must protect. Risky outdoor play is important and has many positive effects on health, including increased physical activity and decreased sedentary behavior, as well as improved learning, mental and physical health, increased play time, social interaction, and creativity. Through risky play, children have opportunity to not only learn and grow, but to be physically active, become more independent, resilient, navigate uncertainty, develop coping skills, learn important self-regulation skills, and become confident, capable humans.

Basic Safety Awareness Skills

1. Respect support systems

There are certain activities and items at nature preschool that require adult supervision and/or support. Risky play is an inherent part of nature play and discovery at Little Seeds and our dedicated and knowledgeable staff team works closely with our students to ensure preschoolers acknowledge and understand the support systems they have during risky play. Children must respect tools and equipment while recognizing they are not to use these items without direct instruction from a teacher. Children must also recognize they need teacher permission and support for activities such as tree climbing, big jumps, or nature potty.

2. Stop, Look, and Listen

Our classroom spans across many diverse landscapes. As a class we explore all of these areas and get the opportunity to run, jump, and climb. Your child understands that purposefully running away from a teacher is unsafe and unacceptable. Your child will respond to voice and visual commands regularly and understands they must always be able to see where their teacher is during work and play. They respect and acknowledge that teachers are in charge, wait for their guidance, and follow teachers' instructions.

3. Protect your body inside and out

Weather safety is an important ongoing lesson supported by teachers and families. Your child understands the need to properly layer on cold days or cover up and wear sunscreen on hot days when going outdoors. Your child protects the inside of their body – nature items and toys are not for eating. Sometimes we have plants for fun food at Nature Preschool. A teacher will always tell us first when something is safe to eat. Your child will not put things in their mouth or eat things without a teacher's permission.

4. Understanding Consent

Your body is yours only. Your child acknowledges that they must not touch someone or something they have without asking for permission first. Such as, asking for a hug, a toy, or asking to play wrestle. Your child understands that responses to these questions can be yes, not right now but in a minute, or no thank you. If your child is ever unsure about an activity or interaction they have been encouraged to do, they have the right to say "No thank you" and ask a teacher for help.

5. Road & Water Safety

Your child understands safety concerns around busy spaces including roadways. They do not run into the road or toward cars. They are working on looking right, then left, then right again before crossing the road, and only crossing the road if they are holding the hand of an adult. They do not get out of the car without an adult. Your child understands safety concerns around open water. They understand that they must be with an adult when they are near rivers, lakes, or docks. They listen to rules when we are around water and stay within adult designated boundaries.

Schools and communities have a responsibility to protect children and it is part of a child's growth at home and school that basic safety skills should be taught. The earlier we start conversations surrounding basic safety the better, and it is always an ongoing conversation. By teaching children to protect themselves, we put them in a good position for a safe, healthy, and happy future. For additional information please review Little Seeds Nature Preschool Behavior Policy.

By signing this form, I _____ acknowledge that with the
(Guardian)

proper developmental supports _____ can successfully meet
(Student)

these benchmarks for basic safety awareness at Little Seeds Nature Preschool a majority of the time.

X _____ Date: _____