**Play with Risk Policy (EYFS September 2025 Reforms)**

**Policy Statement**   
At Little Acorns preschool, we believe that carefully managed risk is an essential part of children’s learning and development. Opportunities to engage in challenging play activities such as climbing, balancing, using loose parts, and exploring the outdoor environment allow children to develop resilience, confidence, and problem-solving skills. This policy outlines how we enable children to experience safe, supervised risk-taking in play, in line with the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) 2025 framework.

**Legal Framework**  
This policy is guided by national legislation and statutory guidance, including but not limited to:

* EYFS Statutory Framework 2025
* Health and Safety at Work Act 1974
* The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999
* Children Act 1989 and 2004
* Department for Education (2021) *Development Matters* (non-statutory curriculum guidance)
* Health and Safety Executive (HSE) guidance on “Children’s Play and Leisure – Promoting a Balanced Approach”

**Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)**  
The DSL ensures that safeguarding principles underpin our approach to play with risk. While risk in play is not a safeguarding concern in itself, it must always be managed.

**Implementation of the EYFS 2025 Play and Risk Principles**

**1. The Value of Risk in Play**  
We recognise that:

* Risk-taking in play supports children’s physical development, coordination, and strength.
* Challenging play builds self-esteem, resilience, and independence.
* Risky play provides opportunities for children to learn about their own limits and develop risk assessment skills.

**2. Creating Safe, Risk-Managed Environments**  
We provide environments that encourage challenge but minimise unnecessary hazards by:

* Conducting regular risk-benefit assessments of indoor and outdoor play areas.
* Ensuring play equipment is age-appropriate, well-maintained, and used under supervision.
* Encouraging children to explore, climb, balance in safe, structured contexts.

**3. Staff Supervision and Role Modelling**  
Staff are responsible for:

* Supervising children closely while allowing them space to explore.
* Supporting children in assessing risks themselves (e.g., “Do you feel safe climbing higher?”).
* Intervening only when necessary to prevent serious harm.
* Modelling safe behaviours and language around risk.

**4. Outdoor Play and Natural Challenges**  
Our outdoor provision includes opportunities for:

* Climbing, balancing, jumping, and running on uneven ground.
* Exploring natural materials such as sticks, logs, stones, and water.
* Using weather conditions as learning opportunities, with appropriate clothing and safety measures in place.

**5. Loose Parts Play**  
We provide a range of loose parts to encourage creativity, problem-solving, and teamwork. These are:

* Risk assessed regularly to ensure suitability.
* Used under staff supervision to prevent unsafe practices.
* Introduced to children with clear expectations of safe use.

**6. Partnership with Parents and Carers**  
We work with parents to:

* Communicate the benefits of supervised risk in play.
* Reassure them that risks are carefully managed through risk-benefit assessments.
* Involve them in discussions about outdoor play and learning.

**7. Children’s Involvement in Risk Assessment**  
We involve children in thinking about safety by:

* Encouraging them to identify potential hazards.
* Discussing how to manage risks (e.g., taking turns, holding on).
* Supporting children to make informed choices and develop responsibility.

**Record Keeping and Information Sharing**

* Accident and incident records are maintained and used to inform future risk management.
* Parents are informed of any significant incidents and how risks are managed.

Signed: Chairperson  
Date: September 2025

**References**

* Department for Education (2025). *Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage: Setting the standards for learning, development and care for children from birth to five.* London: DfE.
* Department for Education (2021). *Development Matters: Non-statutory curriculum guidance for the Early Years Foundation Stage.* London: DfE.