



Physical Activity and Risky Play Policy

Cherish Childcare recognises physical activity as essential to children's health, confidence, motor development, wellbeing and learning. We provide regular opportunities for movement, active play and appropriate challenge.

Our aims

- encourage daily movement from infancy through floor-based play, crawling, climbing, balancing, walking, running, dancing and active outdoor play;
- reduce unnecessary sedentary time and long periods in restrictive equipment;
- provide a balance of child-led and adult-supported physical experiences;
- support children to develop confidence, coordination, strength and fundamental movement skills; and
- help children learn to assess and manage age-appropriate risk.

Physical activity in everyday practice

- Non-mobile babies are given frequent opportunities for tummy time, reaching, grasping, rolling and unrestricted floor play.
- Mobile children have regular access to open space, outdoor play, climbing, wheeled toys, balls, movement games, dance, yoga, action songs and other active experiences.
- Physical opportunities are adapted to children's developmental stage, SEND, medical needs and individual confidence.
- Staff observe children's movement development and extend challenge gradually rather than expecting children to perform beyond their stage.
- Pushchairs, highchairs and other restrictive equipment are used only for their intended purpose and for no longer than necessary.

Risky play and appropriate challenge

Risky play does not mean unsafe play. It refers to developmentally appropriate opportunities in which children experience uncertainty, challenge and manageable risk while supported by attentive adults.

This policy was adopted on	Signed on behalf of the nursery	Date for review
1 September 2026	Cherish Childcare	1 September 2027



- Staff complete and review risk assessments while preserving appropriate challenge rather than removing all risk.
- Children are supported to climb, balance, move at speed, explore height and negotiate space when the environment and equipment are suitable.
- Adults use questions such as 'How can you do that safely?' and 'What do you notice?' to develop children's own risk awareness.
- Clear boundaries are used where there is a foreseeable risk of serious harm.
- Activities are adapted or stopped where conditions, equipment, staffing or a child's individual needs make the risk unreasonable.

Staff role

- position themselves so they can supervise effectively without unnecessarily interrupting play;
- model safe use of equipment and respectful physical interaction;
- avoid over-helping where a child can safely attempt something independently;
- intervene promptly where a child is at immediate risk of significant injury; and
- reflect on incidents and near misses to improve the environment and practice.

Outdoors, outings and community activity

Children are given regular opportunities to be active outdoors and, where appropriate, through local walks and outings. Off-site activity is planned and risk assessed in line with the Missing Child and Outings Policy.

Working with families

Parents/carers are encouraged to support active travel and physical play where practical. Staff share information about children's physical development and discuss any concerns or additional support needs with families.

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