

[The Child and Nature Alliance of Canada's](#) (CNAC) Fireside Chats series is a virtual space for Forest/Nature School practitioners to meet, share experiences, and answer questions related to a theme. The purpose of Fireside Chats is to engage with the Forest/Nature School community of practice to co-develop a set of **Quality Indicators for Forest/Nature School**. The series is part of the 3-year Community Consultation Project CNAC is undertaking, with support from the [Lawson Foundation](#).

To learn more, visit <https://childnature.ca/community-consultation-project/>.

## What to Expect

- Conversation with Guest Speakers
- Facilitated Breakout Room Discussions (have your cameras and/or microphones ready!)
- Questions and Polls in the chat

## Registration

This event is open to Forest/Nature School practitioners in Canada.

**Register for free:** <https://zoom.us/meeting/register/tJYkdu2rqDojHNGgTk4-QZtNrY-yEDpVUzAp>

(Zoom Meeting link will be provided upon registration).

**Please note:** The main event (i.e. Conversation with Guest Speakers) will be recorded. Breakout room discussions will not be recorded.

## Theme and Discussion Questions: Relationship with Play

During this Fireside Chat, we are going to dive into four [Principles of Forest/Nature School](#) practice and how they relate to our **Relationship with Risky Play**. We would love to hear from you during the event. Here are the questions that we will ask (you can also [fill out this survey](#))!

### Principle of Practice

Forest/Nature School views risky play as an integral part of children's learning and healthy development, and is facilitated by knowledgeable, qualified educators who support children and youth to co-manage risk.

### Discussion Questions

- 1) Do you use the term risky play?
- 2) Do you prefer to use other terminology (e.g., adventurous play, challenging play, active play, etc.)?

## Principle of Practice

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**Risky Play:** Thrilling and exciting play that involves the possibility of physical injury. Risky Play provides opportunities for challenge, testing limits, exploring boundaries, and learning about injury risk (1). Risky Play can be categorized as: great heights, high speeds, dangerous tools, dangerous elements, rough and tumble, disappearing or getting lost, impact, vicarious play (2).

(1) Outdoor Play Canada

(2) [Ellen Sandester \(2019\)](#).

“[A precedent-setting 2015 judgement](#) on a playground injury claim shows that the courts accept that sometimes accidents happen in children’s play and no one is to blame. The judgement ruled against a claim, citing that risk is an inherent part of children’s outdoor play (p. 16)” (3).

(3) [Risk-Benefit Assessment for Outdoor Play: A Canadian Toolkit](#)

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Forest/Nature School prioritizes building reciprocal relationships with First Nations, Métis, and Inuit, who have been learning from this Land since time immemorial.

## Discussion Questions

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3) How should a quality Forest/Nature School **program** in Canada demonstrate its competency in supporting risky play (e.g., protocols for extreme weather, site risk assessment, emergencies, etc.)?

4) How should a quality Forest/Nature School **practitioner** in Canada demonstrate its competency in supporting risky play (e.g., first-aid training, interaction with children, etc.)?

5) What emergency plans should a quality Forest/Nature School program in Canada have in place (e.g., missing child, running child, injury, etc.)?

6) How do you support a child’s choice to engage in risky play? What is your role as an adult?

7) How do you include children in assessing risk?

8) How do you communicate the value of risky play with parents/caregivers?

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9) How should a quality Forest/Nature School program in Canada address the privilege of risky play (e.g., there is a perceived/real threat that Indigenous children will be apprehended by child welfare services if they are seen in a “dangerous” or “negligent” situation; in the context of [MMIWG](#), play involving disappearing or getting lost can have a different impact)?

## Principle of Practice

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Forest/Nature School practices, policies, and programming reflect and prioritize the building of engaged, healthy, vibrant, and diverse communities through consideration of access and equity in our decisions and actions.

**Access:** To provide accommodations where necessary to ensure all children have the resources and support to participate fully in your forest/nature school program.

**Equity:** To ensure all children feel safe, comfy, and proud of who they are at your Forest/Nature School program.

## Discussion Questions

10) Is risky play accessible to everyone?

11) Risk is both physically and perceptually different for every person. How does a quality Forest/Nature School program in Canada support the full spectrum of risky play?