

Health Concerns

Communication with Families



When communicating with families it is important to:

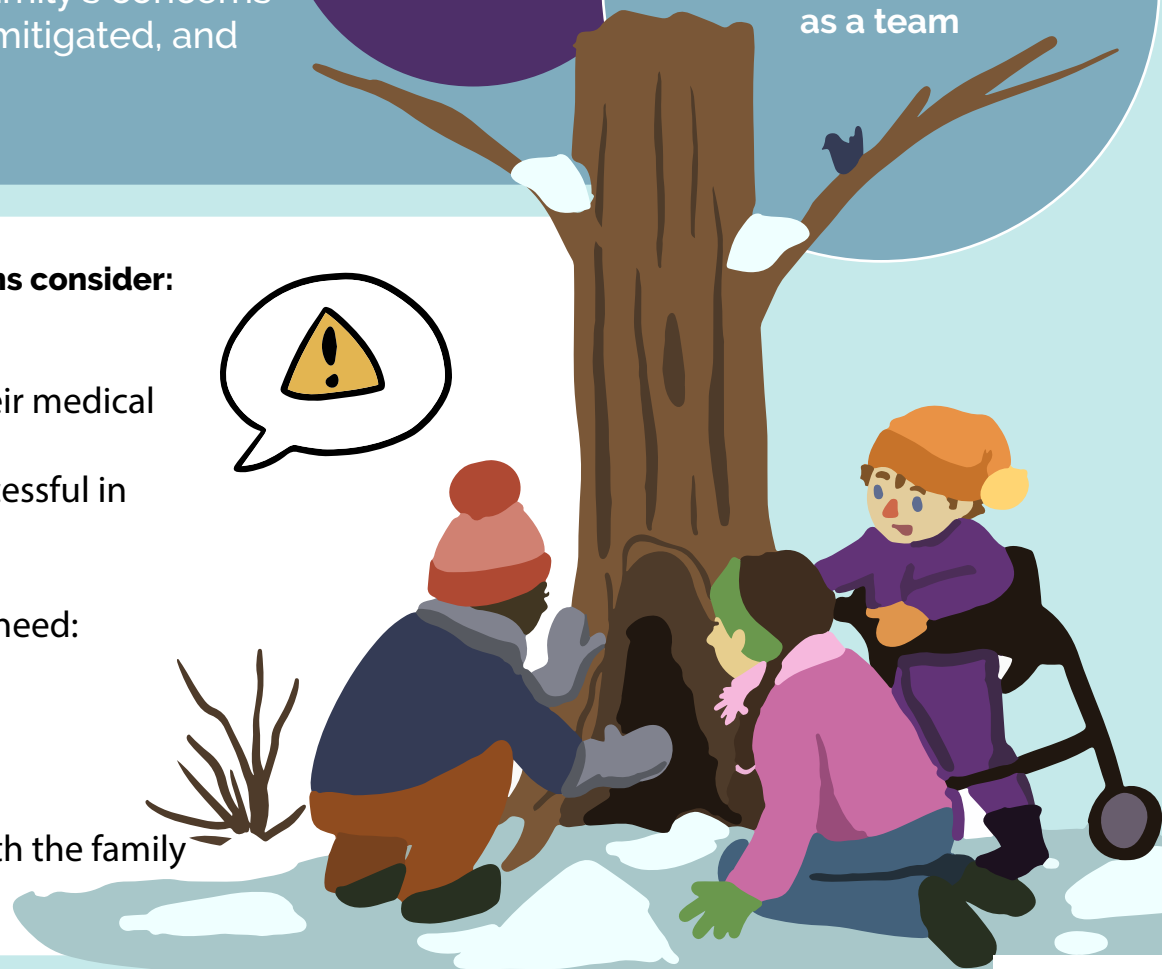
- Ask questions
- Acknowledge and validate the family's concerns
- Discuss how risks are assessed, mitigated, and managed
- Problem-solve together

Playing outside is important for healthy development

All children can be supported outdoors through all seasons when their health concerns are managed and monitored as a team

When supporting children with health concerns consider:

- The child's specific health needs
 - Asking questions to learn more about their medical needs
 - How you can support the child to be successful in their outdoor play
- What additional supports the program may need:
 - Mobility or inclusive equipment
 - Additional staff for support
 - Specific outdoor gear
- Information or resources you could share with the family on the importance of outdoor play



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Find resources and so much more at OutdoorPlayCanada.ca and the [SPROUT-able Project Page](#)

Physical Safety

Communication with Families



When supporting children with physical safety concerns consider:

- Reasons why the child might be engaging in this behavior
 - What they might be trying to tell you
 - Whether they have big feelings without the ability to communicate verbally
 - What sensory needs they may be trying to meet
- Incorporating calming spaces into your environment
 - A cozy corner with soft fabrics and books
 - A hammock or swing
 - A retreat space for hiding and onlooking
- Embracing a trial-and-error process to find what works best for you and the child
- Information or resources you could share with the family on the importance of outdoor play



All children can be supported outdoors through all seasons when their health concerns are managed and monitored as a team

Playing outside is important for healthy development



When communicating with families it is important to:

- Keep them informed on what is happening, be empathetic to their concerns
- Give them time and space to share
- Provide possible solutions and ask for their input
- Reassure them and maintain open communication



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Risky Play

For Children of All Abilities

A form of play that is thrilling and exciting, which involves uncertainty, unpredictability, and varying degrees of risk-taking (PLaTO-Net)

Risk is relative, and no matter what a child's abilities are, they can engage in and benefit from play that is challenging to them

Risky play is a personalized experience that differs depending on a child's age, experiences and ability levels



When supporting risky play for children of all abilities consider:



- How the risky play opportunities in your play space can engage children of all abilities
 - Providing opportunities that can be accessed by a range of ability levels
 - Providing sticks, logs, other loose parts, and tools that can a variety of physical challenges
- Offering 'challenge by choice': which means having a variety of invitations for children to engage in an activity to the level they are comfortable
- Providing 'dignity of risk': which means allowing children of all abilities the opportunity to engage in risky play
- Reading books that reflect children of different abilities taking on challenges.



When supporting risky play for children of all abilities it is important to:

- Reassure them you are nearby to support if needed
 - Allow them to participate at the level they are comfortable with
- Problem solve ways to include their peers when an activity presents a barrier

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Sensory Needs

Dressing for Outdoor Play



When supporting a child's sensory needs it is important to:

- Be curious, ask questions, and use empathetic language
- Problem-solve together through the difficult moment - make them feel seen, heard, and supported
- S.T.O.P. before you both get overwhelmed and frustrated - Stop, Take a breath, Observe, and Proceed with care



When supporting sensory needs, while dressing for outdoor play consider:

- Slowing down your transitions, getting dressed in smaller groups, and using visuals or social stories
- Practicing getting dressed at other times of the day and making it into a game - this is a great way to introduce new gear or fabrics
- Giving yourself time to observe and understand the child's specific needs and preferences - the child's family is a great resource for getting this type of insight



Work with the child and their family to learn more about their preferences and how you can support them

Some children may find certain materials or combinations of clothing uncomfortable to wear

Use the QR code to find out what type of clothing and gear is best in different types of weather

Dressing appropriately for the weather is key to embracing outdoor play and learning in all seasons

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