

TERESA PARCZEWSKA

AFFORDANCES OF OUTDOOR RISKY PLAY IN A TRADITIONAL AND A FOREST KINDERGARTEN

INTRODUCTION

Risky play can be generally defined as an exciting and thrilling form of activity that involves the risk of physical injury (Sandseter, 2007; Sandseter et al. 2021). Children's risky play has both positive and negative sides. The immediate risk of injury occurs when children seek out physical hazards during play activities, which has led to a growing interest in play safety and the development of legislation on playground design (reviewed in Ball, 2002). The balance between the risks and benefits of risky play has been debated over the past two decades, and growing concern over the shrinking opportunities for its implementation has been evident in the literature (see, e.g., Brudzinska, 2022; Hughes, 1990; Jambor, 1998; Clements, 2004; Gill, 2007; Lester, 2007, Sandseter et al., 2021). However, there has been little research on the affordances of risky play, its values and the factors that influence children's involvement in such activities, especially in Poland. Environmental psychology examining child–environment relations has too often overlooked the environment itself (Kyttä, 2008). We need studies of children's environments focused on the play space to anchor children's experiences and behavior in physical settings. The presented research project provides information that can be used in planning outdoor child-friendly environments that meet children's developmental needs.

Dr hab. TERESA PARCZEWSKA, prof. UMCS, Institute of Pedagogy, Faculty of Education and Psychology, Maria Curie-Skłodowska University; correspondence address: Instytut Pedagogiki UMCS, ul. Głęboka 43, 20-612 Lublin, Poland; e-mail: teresa.parczewska@mail.umcs.pl; ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-7651-5519>.

AFFORDANCES IN THE PLAY ENVIRONMENT

Although children are naturally driven to engage in risky play, features of the play environment influence, enable, or constrain the nature and quality of play. Gibson's theory of affordances (1979) states that the physical environment we live in enables various activities and behaviors. The affordances of the environment are what it "encourages" us to do, and the concept of affordances encompasses both the environment and the person, meaning that they are unique to each individual and correspond to body size, strength, skills, courage, and fear. Heft (1988) developed Gibson's theory, arguing that the environment provides children with different types of play and that children perceive the functions of the environment as an invitation to certain activities. In his work on affordances in children's play environments, Heft (1988) compiled a taxonomy of environmental features that provide such activities as climbing, jumping in, jumping off, swinging, and sliding. Other examples of affordances include objects that can be lifted, surfaces on which to stand and on which to walk and run, objects behind which to hide, and objects on which to climb and under which to crawl (Heft, 1988). The above examples demonstrate that affordances are relationally determined, both by the attributes of the environmental feature and the attributes of a particular person. Kyttä (2004, p. 181) elaborated on this theory, distinguishing potential affordances which are determined in relation to the person and, which can be perceived and utilized. Utilized affordances are a subset of the former, which the individual perceives, uses, or shapes. Gibson (1979) argued that other people also offer affordances through inspiring and constraining actions. Kyttä (2004) takes a similar stance, stating that children's ability to move freely, giving them space for independent mobility, is important for enabling unforced action and their desire to break out of adult control, and therefore closely related to the ability to actualize affordances. As children's actions and mobility in the environment become problematic or even impossible, children can no longer explore their environment using their bodies. Thus, they will not be able to see affordances in the environment. When children find affordances in the environment, they perceive it as an interesting and challenging place of adventure and exploration that inspires them to move around and find even more affordances. The cycle of forming this type of positive relationship with the environment is possible under ideal conditions, which Kyttä (2003) referred to as "Bullerby"¹ in her research. The opposite situation of

¹ "Bullerby" can be literally translated as 'noisy town'. This term is used by the famous Swedish writer Astrid Lindgren (<http://www.astridlindgren.se>) in many of her children's novels where she describes the life of a group of children living in a Swedish village of Bullerby. Marketta Kyttä

a negative cycle can also take place, the author states. In this case, children live in what she calls “a Cell”, without the possibility of establishing a personal relationship with the environment (Kyttä, 2003).

In another study, Lee (1999) sought to understand the interaction between the physical environment of play space and children’s play by interviewing caregivers about their experiences of different types of play. Lee distinguished between three different types of playgrounds: 1) a playground with traditional equipment, 2) a playground with a modern design, and 3) a natural playground (adventure type). A traditional playground is equipped with play equipment such as swings, slides, merry-go-rounds, and sandboxes. The modern playground has innovative forms with different heights and textures, all in aesthetically pleasing arrangements designed by landscape architects. A natural playground includes wild, natural areas using materials such as wood, ropes, and stones. Lee (1999) found that children respond to naturalized playgrounds enthusiastically, are creative, and engage in a variety of challenging play. Other researchers (Fjørtoft, 2000; Kaarby, 2004) have noticed that functional play, such as the practice of large motor skills and basic motor skills (running, jumping, throwing, climbing, crawling, rolling, swinging, tree climbing, archery, rolling on the ground, balancing on rocks or fallen trees, and fencing with twigs) dominate when children play in nature. The structure of the landscape: steep slopes and tall trees provide play such as climbing and sliding, which, according to children, makes traditional playgrounds less interesting than natural ones (Fjørtoft, 2000). All of these studies support Gibson’s assumption that the natural environment provides more intense and varied physical activity than a traditional playground (1979). In the presented research project, we expect that the characteristics of the play environment will impact the nature and extent of the affordances of children’s risky play.

METHODOLOGY

Research goal and problems

The purpose of the research project was to qualitatively investigate the affordances of children’s risky play in two different kindergartens (a traditional

justifies the choice of this term as follows: “I chose this term because of the ideal situation for the children, as Bullerby offers children the opportunity to participate in all the daily activities of the village and provides children with meaningful tasks and roles in the community” (Kyttä, 2003, p. 12).

one and a forest/nature facility) located in the Lublin province. The research project sought answers to the following research questions:

1. In what ways do the different features of the physical space of the traditional and forest kindergarten enable children's risky play?
2. What are the current affordances of children's risky play in a traditional and a forest playground?
3. What is children's degree of freedom of movement in a traditional and a forest playground when children engage in risky play?
4. To what extent and in what situations did staff at the traditional and the forest playground supervise children's risky play?

Methods

Risky play was observed and videotaped for 12 days, over four months (March–June 2022), at a traditional and a forest playground. Research material was also collected through semi-structured interviews with children and interviews with the staff (teachers and employees who acted as guardians). Sample questions for children included: 1) In which places do you play most often? Why? 2) Are all the games you like safe? 3) Which games do you think are risky? 4) Do you climb trees? Why? 5) What do adults say about such games? 6) What can and can't be done in the kindergarten? The staff were asked about the types of play undertaken by children, including risky play and its potential consequences, as well as how they deal with this.

The data were analyzed to determine how different features of the environment enable risky play and how these affordances are actualized in children's play. During visits to the studied facilities, the aim was to learn and understand the various dimensions of pedagogy adopted and implemented outdoors, through a process of radical enquiry (Clough & Nutbrown, 2012). Transcripts of video recordings and interviews, as well as field notes were analyzed to reveal current affordances (Kyttä, 2004). We identified types of risky play the children engaged in different settings: in a traditional facility and a forest facility. The observations and interviews were also analyzed to determine the degree of freedom of movement (Kyttä, 2004), particularly when children engaged in risky play. Transcriptions of video observations were examined to determine to what extent and in what situations staff supervised children when they engaged in risky play.

Participants

The study group consisted of 32 children aged 4–6, including 14 children from a forest facility and 18 from a traditional kindergarten. Their outdoor play activities

were observed and recorded with video cameras at different times of the year: in late winter, spring, and early summer. We observed not only children but also the behavior of the staff (3 people from the forest kindergarten and 4 from the traditional one) in situations of risky play undertaken by the children. Twenty-eight children (13 from the forest facility and 15 from the traditional facility) were interviewed about outdoor play, particularly risky play. The interviews were conducted following a developed script with a list of questions and problems that included categories of risky play (Sandseter, 2007). Each interview lasted about 20–30 minutes and was recorded with a voice recorder. Preschool head teachers, staff, children and their parents were informed about the research project. Data collection took place after obtaining written consent from parents/legal guardians, for their child to participate in the study. The selection of facilities and participants in this study was purposive (Berg, 2007; Merriam, 2002; Patton, 1990).

Study area

The study area comprised two kindergarten facilities:

1. A traditional kindergarten, located by a busy street in the center of a small town. Right at the entrance to the facility, there is a small parking lot. The playground, equipped with swings, slides, climbing devices, a sandbox, and a playhouse, has separate spaces for younger and older children. Many wooden houses for insects and hedgehogs, made by parents, have been placed around the area on trees and under trees.

2. A forest kindergarten, located on the outskirts of a large city, by the State Forestry, covering about one hectare (1/3 of the plot is forested). The premises are almost entirely devoted to children's exploration. The unused space left as a wild meadow is used by children to create play areas, mazes and hiding places, according to their ideas. The forest road leading to the facility can sometimes be inconvenient, especially in autumn, winter and spring, due to heavy snow and rain. For most of the year, access is possible, although not easy. Parents who do not have an off-road vehicle often put on wellingtons and travel more than half a kilometre on foot with their children. The facility has no access to running water or electricity, which is sometimes a logistical impediment, but does not affect the quality of care provided.

The characteristic features of the investigated environments were collected through the compiled field notes, photographs, and video recordings. A broader description of these will be presented with the description of potential affordances. Data on risky play was collected based on six categories of risky play: 1) play with great heights – danger of falling, 2) play with high speed, 3) play with dangerous

tools, 4) play near dangerous elements of the environment, 5) rough-and-tumble play with the use of force, e.g., spontaneous wrestling, falling over, pushing, 6) play in places where children can “disappear”/get lost (details in Sandseter, 2007).

Data analysis

A content analysis was carried out on the collected research material (Berg, 2007; Patton, 2002). The analysis was based on Coffey and Atkinson’s theory (1996). Each of the potential affordances of children’s environments for children’s risky play, as categorized by Sandseter (2007), was analyzed in relation to the most relevant categories of affordances developed by Heft (1988) and Kytta (2004). Categories of risky play are shown in parentheses:

- 1) objects providing the opportunity to climb: allow climbing (great heights);
- 2) objects providing the opportunity to jump: allow jumping (great heights);
- 3) objects providing opportunities for balancing: allow balancing (great heights);
- 4) places with flat, relatively smooth surfaces: allow cycling, scootering, running, skating and skiing (high speed and rough-and-tumble play);
- 5) slopes and hills: allow sliding, sledging and running, biking, skiing (high speed);
- 6) objects that provide opportunities for swinging: allow swinging (high speed and great heights);
- 7) objects that can be grabbed or detached: allow throwing, hitting, and fencing (dangerous elements);
- 8) objects that can be used for whittling, sawing, chopping, slicing, and slashing (dangerous tools);
- 9) places where children can isolate themselves from others, and move away from caregivers, such as tall grass (disappear/get lost).

To reveal current affordances (Kytta, 2004), transcripts from video recordings, field notes, and interviews were examined to determine the types of risky play children engaged in various settings. Observations and interviews were also analyzed to determine the extent to which children had or experienced freedom of movement (Kytta, 2004), particularly when engaging in risky play. Transcripts of the recorded videos were analyzed to determine the extent to which, and in what situations, staff at the two studied facilities supervised the children, took the initiative, or restricted risky play. The results of the above three analytical procedures were treated at an interpretive level, referring to previous studies assessing how environments influence children’s ability to engage in risky play.

RESULTS

Potential affordances in the traditional kindergarten playground

- Objects for climbing: a climbing wall (height: 1.5–2 m), playhouse (climbing on the roof, height: 1.5 meters), 3 trees that can be climbed (height: 3–5 m)
- Objects for jumping off: a climbing wall (height: 1.5–2 m), playhouse (from the roof, height: 1.5 m), large wooden locker (height: 1.5 m)
- Objects for balancing: the side of a wooden boat used as a sandbox
- Flat, relatively smooth surfaces for cycling and running – the area around the kindergarten has a flat surface with grass and several paths made of paving stones
- Slopes and slides – the outdoor area is mostly flat, but there is one hill (about 2 meters above the rest of the surface)
- Possibility of swinging – two swings
- Objects that can be grasped or detached: several twigs, small branches fallen on the ground, and pinecones
- Dangerous tools: none
- Dangerous objects: none
- Places where you can disappear/get lost: a hill you can hide behind
- The playground is surrounded by a fence and a lockable gate

Actualized affordances in the traditional kindergarten playground

Observations, videos, and interviews were analyzed referring to six categories of risky play (Sandseter, 2007) to determine the types of risky play in the kindergarten playground that children undertook there (Table 1).

Table 1. Actualized affordances of risky play in a traditional kindergarten playground results from observations, videos, and interviews with the children

Observations	Situations: 49	Interviews	Respondents: 15
<u>Great heights:</u>	<u>Total: 17</u>	<u>Great heights:</u>	
Climbing the hill	5	Climbing the roof of the playhouse	8
Climbing the roof of the playhouse	6	Jumping off the swing	6
Climbing the climbing wall	6	Climbing the climbing wall	13
<u>High speed:</u>	<u>Total: 25</u>	<u>High speed:</u>	
Swinging	10	Swinging	13
Running	9	Running	15

Sledging	6	Sledging	7
<u>Rough-and-tumble play:</u>	<u>Total: 7</u>	<u>Rough-and-tumble play:</u>	
Wrestling, pushing	4	Wrestling	6
Fencing using twigs	3	Fighting using twigs	9
		Running and catching others	7
		<u>Places where you can disappear/get lost:</u>	
		Hiding behind the hill	3

Of the 49 instances of risky play observed in the traditional kindergarten, 17 of them were play with great heights, 25 were situations involving high speed, while 7 situations were play described as rough, involving wrestling, knocking over and fighting with twigs. Play with dangerous tools and play when children could disappear/get lost were not observed. The results of the interviews indicate that, as in the case of observations and videos, play with high speed and great heights were the most frequent forms of risky play in a traditional kindergarten. As in the case of observations, the interviews did not mention play near dangerous objects or play with dangerous tools. In the case of play in which one can disappear/get lost, 3 children talked about moving away from the group and hiding behind a hill from teachers and classmates, indicating they were not allowed to do so.

Potential affordances in the forest kindergarten playground

- Objects for climbing: dozens of trees that can be climbed (from small trees to ones up to 6–7 m high), a hillside, a playhouse (height: 2 m)
- Elements to jump from: several climbing trees (allow you to jump down from lower branches), the roof of the playhouse (height: 2 m)
- Objects for balancing: several fallen tree trunks
- Flat, relatively smooth surfaces for cycling, sledging, and running: the kindergarten grounds are hilly with a mix of slopes and flat natural forest area with grass, shrubs and trees
- Elements that allow swinging: swings made of ropes tied to tree branches, at various heights
- Objects that can be grabbed or detached: several sets of gardening tools, buckets and shovels, many wooden twigs and pinecones fallen to the ground

- Dangerous tools: scissors, hammers, pruning shears, whittling knives, and hand saws for cutting branches (used only under adult supervision, on the premises and while hiking)
 - Dangerous places: a fire pit, a hole about 1 m deep
 - Fencing/restrictions: the area is fenced with metal mesh with a gate that is locked after children are picked up from the kindergarten
 - Places where you can disappear/get lost: most of the area is overgrown with tall grasses and bushes.

Actualized affordances in the forest kindergarten playground

The data collected in the forest kindergarten was analyzed to determine the types of risky play children engaged in (Table 2).

Table 2. Actualized affordances of risky play in the forest kindergarten natural playground – results of observations, videos, and interviews with children

Observations	Situations: 77	Interviews	Respondents: 13
<u>Great heights:</u>	<u>Total: 31</u>	<u>Great heights:</u>	
Climbing the trees	15	Climbing the trees	12
Climbing the playhouse roof	6	Walking on a tree trunk over the pit (1,5m deep x 3,5m long)	9
Climbing the steep slope	5	Jumping from high places	6
Climbing the rope	5	Climbing the playhouse roof	6
<u>High speed</u>	<u>Total: 25</u>	<u>High speed</u>	
Swinging on the rope	10	Running: playing policemen and thieves	8
Sledging from the hill	8	Swinging on the rope	8
Running	7	Sledging	5
<u>Rough-and-tumble play</u>	<u>Total: 9</u>	Twisting the rope while swinging and letting go so it untwists	2
Fencing with twigs	5	<u>Rough-and-tumble play</u>	
Pushing	4	Snowball or pinecone fight	9
<u>Dangerous places</u>	<u>Total: 2</u>	Playing warriors (superheroes)	6
Fire pit (adding logs to the fire)	2	Tug of war	4
<u>Dangerous tools</u>	<u>Total: 4</u>	<u>Dangerous places</u>	

Whittling twigs for a campfire with a knife	2	Roasting a marshmallow	9
Cutting branches with pruning shears	2	<u>Dangerous tools</u>	
<u>Disappear/Get lost</u>	<u>Total: 6</u>	Whittling sticks	10
Looking for privacy: play in the tall grass	6	Cutting bread	9
		Peeling vegetables	7
		Cutting branches with a hand saw	6
		Hammering nails with a hammer	6
		Removing nails with pliers	5
		<u>Disappear/Get lost</u>	
		Hide oneself from others in the grass	10

Of the 77 observed instances of risky play, play with great heights (31) and high speed (25) were the most common types of risky activities. There were 9 situations of rough-and-tumble play (fighting with twigs and pushing one another) and 6 situations when children disappeared/got lost. These were situations in which several children went to places overgrown with tall grass (about 2 m) to play alone outside of the staff's sight. We also observed four situations with dangerous tools (a knife and pruning shears) and two situations of playing near dangerous objects. The interviews showed that playing with great heights and high speeds were the most common types of risky play among children attending the forest kindergarten. Almost all of the interviewed children (12 of 13) said they climbed trees.

Staff behavior towards risky play undertaken by children in the traditional kindergarten

In the traditional kindergarten playground, 49 situations of risky play were recorded during the conducted observations. These were analyzed to determine to what extent and in what situations staff exercised supervision over children at play (Table 3).

Table 3. Staff involvement in risky play situations in the traditional kindergarten playground.
Results from observations and video recordings

Staff involvement	Number of situations
Staff not present, not observing	2
Staff observing from a distance	10
Staff observing carefully	18
Staff taking the initiative	8
Staff stopping risky play	11

Table 3 shows that permission to move around the playground in the traditional kindergarten was limited. In the video footage, 19 cases of staff stopping risky play were observed, for example, boys were forbidden to run up the hill or climb on the roof of the playhouse, and girls were forbidden to swing vigorously. In these situations, the present staff member instructed the children to stop playing. In addition, field notes revealed a situation when a staff member forbade children from playing with twigs, instructing them to occupy themselves with something safer. In interviews, all the children said that not everything was allowed in kindergarten (e.g., running fast, pushing, rolling, climbing trees). In addition, the children said they were not allowed to whittle twigs, even under teacher supervision.

Staff behavior towards risky play undertaken by children in the forest kindergarten

In the forest facility, 77 situations of risky play were recorded during data collection. These 77 situations were analyzed to determine to what extent and in what situations children were supervised by the staff (Table 4).

Table 4. Staff involvement in risky play situations in forest kindergarten playground.
Results from observations and video recordings

Staff involvement	Number of situations
Staff not present, not observing	38
Staff observing from a distance	29
Staff observing carefully	5
Staff taking the initiative	4

Table 4 shows that children in the forest kindergarten had extended permission to roam freely in the facility. Only 1 situation was observed when the staff stopped risky play and 4 in which they took the initiative during play. In only 5 situations did the staff carefully observe the children's behavior. These were situations in which children climbed high trees and had trouble getting down. In interviews, children staying at the forest kindergarten generally said they could do almost anything they wanted. However, during further interviews, they also mentioned restrictions and rules when making a campfire, using knives, hand saws, and pruning shears.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

The results of the study showed that both traditional and forest kindergartens have many affordances for risky play, although there are definitely more in the forest facility. The forest kindergarten offered more opportunities, such as climbing trees, swinging and climbing using ropes, play with dangerous tools (under staff supervision), and high speed play. In the traditional playground, there were almost no dangerous elements or places, while in the forest playground, there were a few of these such as the fire pit, a deep hole, a steep slope, tall trees, tree trunks fallen on the ground, and areas where children could disappear/get lost. The forest playground had sledging hills with varying slopes, while the traditional playground had one gentle hill. The swing in the forest playground, made of rope, provided more speed and more height when swinging than the swings in the traditional playground. As Sandseter (2009) points out, the characteristics of environmental features affect the degree of risk a child faces during risky play. The attitude of staff toward risky play is also an important issue. Potential affordances in the play environment will not be actualized if children are not allowed to use the available features of the environment (Sandseter, 2009). Permission for mobility given by staff, and for the undertaken type of risky play was significantly higher in the forest facility than in the traditional facility. During interviews, children from both kindergartens spoke of rules to avoid accidents or injuries during risky play. The difference was that in the traditional kindergarten the rules specified what children were not allowed to do (e.g., "We are not allowed to climb trees." "We are not allowed to run carrying twigs."), while in the forest facility, they informed how to perform a given activity so that it would not pose a health risk (e.g., "I can climb trees whose branches are not dry and are thicker than my leg." "I can hang on branches that are not dry and are thicker than my arm.").

In conclusion, following Sandseter (2007), children seek out risky forms of play in any environment, but due to the characteristics of the environment,

the forest playground provides a higher frequency of children's risky behavior and a higher degree of risk in play. A forest playground allows children to experience more intense, joyful, and exciting play situations than a traditional kindergarten.

Due to the small sample in the presented study, the results cannot be generalized. Still, the obtained data provide insight into the experiences of children attending a forest and traditional kindergarten in Poland. The presented results can enliven reflection on pedagogical practices and the role of teachers who should be sensitive to the needs of children, including with regard to the affordances of risky play outside the kindergarten building.

REFERENCES

- BALL, D. J. (2002). *Playgrounds - Risks, benefits and choices* (Contract research report no. 426/2002). Middlesex University.
- BAŃKA, A. (2002). *Spoleczna psychologia środowiskowa*. Scholar.
- BERG, B. L. (2007). *Qualitative research methods for the social sciences* (6th ed.). Pearson.
- BRUDZIŃSKA, P. (2022). Przestrzeń zabaw ryzykownych w przedszkolu leśnym [Space for risky play in a forest kindergarten]. *Problemy Wczesnej Edukacji*, 54(1), 120–134.
- CLEMENTS, R. (2004). An investigation of the status of outdoor play. *Contemporary Issues in Early Childhood*, 5(1), 68–80.
- COFFEY, A., & ATKINSON, P. (1996). *Making sense of qualitative data complementary research strategies*. Sage.
- CLOUGH, P., & Nutbrown, K. (2012). *A student's guide to methodology* (3rd ed.). Sage.
- COFFEY, A., & Atkinson, P. (1996). *Making sense of qualitative data: Complementary research strategies*. Sage Publications.
- FJØRTOFT, I. (2000). *Landscape and playscape. Learning effects from playing in a natural environment on motor development in children* [Unpublished doctoral dissertation]. Norwegian School of Sport Science, Oslo, Norway.
- GIBSON, J. J. (1979). *The ecological approach to visual perception*. Houghton-Mifflin.
- GILL, T. (2007). *No fear. Growing up in a risk averse society*. Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation.
- HEFT, H. (1988). Affordances of children's environments: A functional approach to environmental description. *Children's Environments Quarterly*, 5(3), 29–37. <http://www.playworksoutheast.org.uk/extrainfo/stuartnotes.pdf>
- HUGHES, B. (1990). Children's play – a forgotten right. *Environment and Urbanization*, 2(2), 58–64.
- JAMBOR, T. (1998). Challenge and risk-taking in play. In D. P. Fromberg & D. Bergen (Eds.), *Play from birth to twelve and beyond. Contexts, perspectives and meanings* (pp. 319–323). Garland Publishing; Taylor & Francis.
- KAARBY, K. M. E. (2004). Children playing in nature [Conference presentation]. CECDE conference: Questions of Quality, Dublin Castle.
- KYTÄ, M. (2002). Affordances of children's environments in the context of cities, small towns, suburbs and rural villages in Finland and Belarus. *Journal of Environmental Psychology*, 22, 109–123.

- KYTTÄ, M. (2003). Children in outdoor context. Affordances and Independent Mobility in the Assessment of Environmental Child Friendliness [Doctoral dissertation]. University of Technology; Centre for Urban and Regional Studies, Helsinki, Finland.
- KYTTÄ, M. (2004). The extent of children's independent mobility and the number of actualized affordances as criteria for child-friendly environments. *Journal of Environmental Psychology*, 24, 179–198.
- KYTTÄ, M. (2008). Children in outdoor contexts affordances and independent mobility in the assessment of environmental child friendliness. VDM Verlag Dr. Müller.
- LEE, S.-H. (1999). The cognition of playground safety and children's play – a comparison of traditional, contemporary, and naturalized playground types. In M. L. Christiansen (Ed.), *Proceedings of the international conference of playground safety*. Penn State University: Center for Hospitality, Tourism & Recreation Research.
- LESTER, S. (2007). Risky play, risky playwork [Conference proceedings]. Spirit of Play Conference 2007, SkillsActive South East England's annual conference.
- MERRIAM, S. B. (2002). *Qualitative research in practice: Examples for discussion and analysis*. Jossey-Bass.
- PATTON, M. Q. (1990). *Qualitative evaluation and research methods* (2nd ed.). Sage.
- PATTON, M. Q. (2002). *Qualitative research & evaluation methods* (3rd ed.). Sage Publications.
- SANDSETER, E. B. H. (2007). Categorizing risky play – How can we identify risk-taking in children's play? *European Early Childhood Education Research Journal*, 15(2), 237–252.
- SANDSETER, E. B. H. (2009). Characteristics of risky play. *Journal of Adventure Education and Outdoor Learning*, 9(1), 3–21.
- SANDSETER, E. B. H., Kleppe R., & Sando O. J. (2021). The prevalence of risky play in young children's indoor and outdoor free play. *Early Childhood Education Journal*, 49(6), 303–312.

AFFORDANCES OF OUTDOOR RISKY PLAY IN A TRADITIONAL AND A FOREST KINDERGARTEN

SUMMARY

The article aims to qualitatively examine the affordances of children's risky play in two different Polish kindergartens, based on Gibson's (1979) theory of affordances and extended work on this theory by other researchers (Heft, 1988; Kyttä, 2002, 2004). Observations of risky play were made in a traditional facility, where children played in a traditional playground, and in a forest facility playground, where children played in nature, in an adventure forest playground (Bubble, 2002; Lee, 1999). The research methods included observation, semi-structured interviews with children, interviews with staff, and visual methods (video recordings using KB 176 mini personal recorders attached to children's clothing in the forest kindergarten and the traditional kindergarten). The data showed the current affordances of risky play and its limitations. I found that the studied play environments (traditional and forest kindergarten) allow children to engage in risky activities, and the degree of staff permission to move freely is an important factor in actualizing the affordances. I have recognized that differences in the quality and characteristics of the two environments have important implications for the affordances of risky play. The natural playground in the forest facility provided a significantly higher degree of risk in children's play activities.

Keywords: affordances; risky play; children; forest kindergarten and traditional kindergarten; play environment.

AFORDANCJE OFEROWANE PRZEZ RYZYKOWNĄ ZABAWĘ DZIECI
W DWÓCH PRZEDSZKOLACH: TRADYCYJNYM I LEŚNYM

STRESZCZENIE

Celem artykułu jest jakościowe zbadanie afordancji związanych z zabawą dzieci w dwóch różnych przedszkolach w Polsce, w oparciu o teorię afordancji Gibsona (1979) i pogłębione opracowania tej teorii (Heft, 1988; Kytä, 2002, 2004). Obserwacje ryzykownych zabaw przeprowadzono w tradycyjnej placówce, gdzie dzieci bawiły się na tradycyjnym placu zabaw, oraz na placu zabaw w placówce leśnej, gdzie dzieci bawiły się na łonie natury, na leśnym placu zabaw (Bubble, 2002; Lee, 1999). Metody badawcze obejmowały obserwację, częściowo ustrukturyzowane wywiady z dziećmi, wywiady z personelem oraz metody wizualne (nagrania wideo za pomocą mini rejestratorów osobistych KB 176 przymocowanych do odzieży dzieci w przedszkolu leśnym i tradycyjnym). Uzyskane dane demonstrują afordancje oferowane przez ryzykowną zabawę, a także jej ograniczenia. Stwierdziłam, że badane tereny zabaw (przedszkole tradycyjne i leśne) pozwalają dzieciom zaangażować się w działania ryzykowne, a zakres przyzwolenia pracowników na swobodne poruszanie się dzieci jest ważnym czynnikiem w realizacji tych afordancji. Uznałam, że różnice w jakości i cechach obu środowisk mają istotne implikacje dla afordancji wynikających z ryzykownej zabawy. Naturalny plac zabaw w ośrodku leśnym wiąże się ze znacznie wyższym ryzykiem dla bawiących się tam dzieci.

Słowa kluczowe: afordancje; ryzykowna zabawa; dzieci; leśne przedszkole i tradycyjne przedszkole; środowisko zabawy.