



# OPAL PLAY: Newsletter 18.3.25

## Rough and Tumble Play



In our most recent assembly, we have talked to the children about introducing rough and tumble play. We wanted to let you know about the decisions we have made with the children, and be open and honest with you, as we know that the idea of this type of play may cause initial alarm! We have made some “light sabres” from swimming noodles (made from foam) and we will allow the children to ‘play fight’ with them. We will be restricting this play to just 6 children at a time and it will be in a closely supervised, designated area of the field. To avoid imbalances in strength, we will not allow the older children play at this activity with the younger children. We have negotiated these rules with the children but have told them that under no circumstances must they deliberately hit each other aggressively and not above the shoulder. Rough and tumble play is one of the main types of play identified by OPAL and the research and scientific evidence shows how beneficial it is to child development. On the reverse of this sheet is our risk benefit assessment.

### WHAT OPAL SAY ABOUT ROUGH & TUMBLE PLAY:

It is a type of physical, boisterous play where children engage in mock fighting, wrestling, tumbling, and other energetic activities.

The key aspects are:

- The children are playing and having fun, not trying to hurt each other.
- It is make-believe, not real fighting.
- It helps children develop emotional regulation, social skills, and physical capabilities.
- It releases positive neurochemicals like dopamine and oxytocin that promote social bonding and learning.
- It is an important and natural part of child development that should be encouraged, not banned.

Arguably it is THE most important play type.

### THE SCIENCE PART!

#### **Neuroscience and Benefits of Rough and Tumble Play:**

- Rough and tumble play releases beneficial neurochemicals: dopamine, oxytocin, serotonin and endorphins.
- It promotes emotional regulation, social bonding, and physical development.
- This play type helps children learn to set boundaries and understand non-verbal cues.
- Rough and tumble play fighting is not the same as real fighting - it is characterised by joy, laughter, and lack of competitive focus.

#### **Why plan and promote Rough and Tumble play?**

- Rough and tumble play is a crucial part of child development, fostering emotional regulation, social skills, and physical capabilities.
- Schools that have introduced rough and tumble play, report improved behaviour, reduced conflicts among students and better emotional regulation.
- Children develop better self-regulation and boundary-setting skills.
- It has a positive impact on gender dynamics and confidence.
- Adult perceptions and fears are often the biggest barrier to allowing rough and tumble play.
- Implementation requires careful planning, communication and ongoing supervision/guidance.



## OBS: RBA Risk Benefit Assessment

<p><b>Area of Play:</b> Field</p> <p><b>Assessment Date:</b> 11<sup>th</sup> March 2025 <b>Review Date:</b> July 25<sup>th</sup> 2025</p> <p><b>Completed by:</b> OPAL Curricular Leads</p>	
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Benefits:</b></p> <p>We can strengthen our core muscles through balance exercise.</p> <p>We can have fun and explore different ways of moving.</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">We can exercise our bodies.</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">We can improve our mental health and social skills.</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">We can work collaboratively.</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">We can try new things.</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">We can take risks in a safe way.</p> <div style="display: flex; align-items: center;">  <div style="margin-left: 10px;"> <p>We can push our bodies to challenge ourselves in different ways.</p> </div> </div>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Possible Activities:</b></p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Balancing</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Wrestling</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Rolling</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Sword play / weapon play</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Fencing</p> <div style="text-align: center;">  </div>
<p><b>Risks children could encounter:</b></p> <p>Falling</p> <p>Tripping</p> <p>Slipping</p> <p>Crowding</p> <p>Getting hurt on the head</p> <p>Being pushed over</p> <p>Getting hurt and requiring first aid</p>	<p><b>Risk Management for children:</b></p> <p>We are aware of the risks of this play type, so we will...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Make sure our play is always safe</li> <li>• Work to our own capabilities</li> <li>• Ensure the area around us is clear of others and that the designated area is used</li> <li>• Ensure there is space to use the equipment safely</li> <li>• Ensure we have awareness of others</li> <li>• Negotiate and share with others around us</li> <li>• Ensure that rough and tumble play is consented to</li> </ul>
<p><b>Monitoring:</b> Ranging supervision to be based near this area. Designated area to be checked on a regular basis by the Play Lead &amp; Curricular Leads.</p>	