

## Exercise | Vigilant care Connected to the playplace



### Background | Information

Risk-taking in play helps children to:

- Test their physical limits
- Develop their perceptual-motor capacity
- Learn to avoid and adjust to dangerous environments and activities

Active supervision, while still giving your child the chance to explore and develop, is key. Child safety experts recommend matching your level of supervision with the potential risk your child is facing, something they call “stages of vigilant care”.

Open observation: the “starting stage”: you play or stay alongside and are non-intrusive in your activities.

Focused attention: you spot warning signs and risk escalates. At this point, you check in with the child, talk and reflect on how to manage the risk. Once that happens, you can return to the “open observation” approach.

- Some warning signs, play and risk escalating: stay focused on what you are doing, ask her is she’s ok,...
- Proximity and check-in: I’m here if you need me, do you feel safe here, check in with each other, make sure everyone is still having a good time,...
- Dialogue and reflection: does that branch feel stable and strong? What is your next move? Should we move this game to a more open area? What’s your plan with that big stick? “That rock looks really heavy! Can you manage it?” Did you like that? Make sure you tell her if you didn’t like that...

Active intervention: there’s an immediate change needed to reduce risk. You intervene using language to empower and prompt the child to return to safety.

(6 March 22: <https://www.parachutecanada.org/en/injury-topic/playgrounds-and-play-spaces/>)

### Get started | Action | Initiate dialogue

Watch a video.

- What would you do here? Why? What makes you react this way or that? Are you doing this consciously?
- What do you think or feel when you hear the others’ answers?
- Does this exercise bring about anything? Does it set something in motion?