This qualitative study was to understand Register Early Childhood Educators (RECE) perspectives and beliefs about risky play in outdoor childcare settings. The researcher conducted five semi-structured interviews to gain insight and provide a voice for RECEs to share their examples and opinions about risky play. Based on the analysis of the data collected the researcher found five main themes: benefits of risky play for young children, safety, educators' values and beliefs, educators' opinions on parents' views and the outdoor environment. These themes are translated throughout literature as according to McFarland and Laird (2017), they state that in today’s increasing regulated and safety-cited society, and safety concerns have led to reduced opportunities for risky play (p. 159). The research revealed that RECEs understand and express the potential benefits for children when promoting and engaging in risky play, but they also highlighted the various factors that can contribute to the lack of implementation of risky play in childcare settings. This supported the researcher in answering the overarching research question and sub-questions as there was a correlation to previous research studies.

Introduction

The purpose of this qualitative study was to understand RECEs perspectives on risky play in outdoor settings? Allowed the researcher to develop a better understanding of the values, beliefs and opinions of experienced RECEs within the field working with young children.

Literature Review

The following literature review provided an outline for the present study

**Research Design**

**Qualitative Study, Semi-Structured Individual Interviews**

- **Recruitment**
  - One to one audio recording interviews
  - 13 questions: 3 demographic, 10 open-ended questions
  - Interviews were 30-45 minutes in length

**Interview Questions**

- Are you a Registered Early Childhood Educator (RECE)?
- How long have you been working with young children in the field?
- What is the age group you work with?
- What is your definition of risky play? What does it look like? Give an example.
- What is your response/interaction to a child climbing and or jumping on materials/equipment?
- What is your response/interaction to a child running up or down hill?
- What is your response/interaction to a child balancing on uneven surfaces? E.g. rocks, buckets under their feet, etc.
- What are your response/action to a child balancing on uneven surfaces? (Rocks, buckets under their feet, etc.)
- What are your response/action to a child running up or down hill?
- What are your response/action to a child climbing and or jumping on materials/equipment?
- What is the age group you work with?
- What is your definition of risky play? What does it look like? Give an example.

**Procedure**

- Obtained permission from the Sheridan Research Ethics Board.
- Recruited participants using purposeful and snowballing sampling.
- Interviews were 30-45 minutes in length
- 13 questions: 3 demographic, 10 open-ended questions
- One to One audio recording interviews

**Participants**

- Five participants
- Register Early Childhood Educators
- Ages 20-40 years old
- Gender: Female (100%)

**Results and Discussion**

**Benefits to Skill Development**

- Children playing in a natural environment had a greater increase in gross motor skill development, motor fitness, balance, and coordination than their peers in traditional playground setting (p. 465).
- Common similarities with participants one, who stated during the study, question seven, fine twenty-seven, that risky play is beneficial and important...as it builds skills that will help them later on in life, like type level coordination, and problem-solving. (Participant, personal communications, January 16, 2020).

**Educators Opinions on Parents Views**

- The findings throughout the data analysis showed that the significant five themes were evident. Themes showcased were benefits to skill development, safety, educators values and beliefs of risky play and educators opinions on parents views and perceptions of risky play. All five participants answered all three questions in-depth where their voices and perspectives were heard. During the data analysis process, each participant’s answers exhibited common similarities and phrases that contrasted throughout previous literature studies. Ex. Child rearing supervision and gained skill development. These common similarities that highlighted each theme are in participants’ quotes in the chart above.

**Discussion and Limitations**

- The themes presented support previous literature studies as there was an overlap of the results. Finding similarities within the present study’s codes and themes to the themes found throughout literature helped gain a better understanding of the research topic. The purpose of having interviewing the interview process allowed the researcher to gain valuable information from participants that were supported in the literature to answer the main research question and overall study. An example of this would be the first theme, benefits to skill development. It is seen in literature when Ernst and Tornabene (2012) report, “young children playing in a natural environment had a greater increase in gross motor skill development, motor fitness, balance, and coordination than their peers in traditional playground setting” (p. 465). Common similarities with participant one, who stated during the study, question seven, fine twenty-seven, that risky play is beneficial and important...as it builds skills that will help them later on in life, like type level coordination, and problem-solving. (Participant, personal communications, January 16, 2020).

**References available upon request.**