

Evaluate how children's physical literacy can be developed by adventurous affordances.

Physical literacy (PL) can be described as 'the motivation, confidence, physical competence, knowledge, and understanding to value and take responsibility for engagement in physical activities for life' (International Physical Literacy Association, 2017). Children's physical literacy can also encompass the stages of positive physical and mental achievements such as, fundamental skill experiences and influenced sensorimotor components from the time they are born. Future physical literacy development associates itself with an early understanding of technical skills and movements. Adventurous affordances can have a positive and negative effect on children's physical literacy, making it important that everyone knows the pros and cons to effectively promote an engaging and fun lifestyle for their own kin and everyone adjacent. This essay will look at the relationship between adventurous affordances and physical literacy and the associated effects it has on a child's own physical literacy.

Adventurous affordances (AA) play a crucial role in developing children's physical literacy by providing opportunities for exploration, risk-taking, and skill development. The term affordance was introduced by the psychologist James J. Gibson (2015) "the affordances of the environment are what it offers the animal, what it provides or furnishes, either for good or ill". Over generations the first definition has evolved to become many different versions of itself and some to become completely different from the original (Chong and Proctor, 2019). AA are the possibilities and opportunities for risk-taking, challenging and exploration in each given environment. Although AA contributes to a child's PL there are negatives to providing PL within AA environment. Safety concerns, exclusionary nature (Araújo Et. Al, 2019), risk-taking behaviors and equity issues to name a few. Each has their own cons making AA not accessible for many families.

Children's PL can greatly be influenced by AA as it provides an exploration and discovery aspect, offering varied environments and challenges allows the children to explore the natural surroundings, these affordances can be physical features of the environment, such as natural barriers like rocks, trees, or hills. They can also explore unnatural structures such as climbing walls, playgrounds or forest high wire trails (Joshi Et. Al, 2021). Exploration within a forest with nature, rocks and trees allow children to foster a more in-depth curiosity and a deeper understanding of their bodies and fundamental motor movements. Furthermore, it also

encourages confidence building and risk-taking, encountering various risks, such as slippery surfaces, uneven ground, fallen trees and unknown fauna and wildlife. Introducing children in the environment while supervised helps children to assess and manage effectively (Fjørtoft, 2001). Additionally using a forest as a medium for improving PL, its cognitive uses allow the child to experience many different sounds, sights, smells, and textures. Exposure to these sensory stimuli enhances their familiarization and motor development, supporting their fine and gross motor skills (Kuo et al., 2019). As a facilitator, our importance when providing these experiences is to conduct the safety management, our job is not to make it impossible for the children to hurt themselves as that reduces the perceived risk that the participants will feel, our role for safety is to provide them with the knowledge of the risks to allow them to think what is right or wrong (Spencer, 2021). According to Whitehead (2010) PL is to develop the whole child at their own level to promote participation in physical pursuits, taking this into account, facilitators are there to determine if the risks are worth it for the participant and only encourage and not force them to do something. When attending the activity in a group with a moderate perceived risk, encouragement of teamwork and camaraderie, this intern develops social interactions and friendships. I believe that exploration and discovery does increase the potential improvements in the PL of children by the effects of AA.

Childrens PL can be influenced by many positive aspects but as there is so many of them there is also just as many negatives. As mentioned earlier safety concerns, exclusionary nature and risk-taking behavior are big factors when it comes to the progression of a child's PL within AA. Safety concerns are connected to negative views on AA as parents, teachers and other outstanding citizens will have problems with sending children to a place where they can potentially injure themselves, problems that may occur are falls, environmental hazards such as sharp rocks, branches, poisonous plants. There is also concern from weather conditions whether it is good weather to do that activity, if parents have a problem of making the decision for the child and not let it think for itself, then that child will always be sheltered and potentially won't have a strong opinion when it grows up. As a facilitator it is our job to discern if it is safe or not for the child to participate, it is also our job to provide as much information as possible about the site we would be going to. This information can be formulated into a risk management assessment, which can be provided to anyone involved with the activities or having their kin as participants (Nichols, 2000). Exclusionary nature is a big part of outdoor recreation, making all activities accessible to everyone to participate no

matter of their personal circumstances or decisions (HM Government, 2010). Although at that point of the activity it is the responsibility of the facilitator to become inclusive and allow everyone who wants to take part to do so, but it requires international efforts to promote diversity, equity, and inclusion in outdoor recreation. Furthermore, this can affect the confidence in the company and the facilitator if they can provide a reasonable service for the participant. Facing modern problems such as financial barriers also affect participation in an outdoor setting as specialist equipment depending on the activity will cost more than staying in a fixed location like a city. Another problem to contest with is the accessibility of an area you want to go to, some companies need to travel an hour and half to get to their destination, this process also continues to increase the price of the activity day making it harder for the customer to pay for the service (Priest and Gass, 2005). Not being able to participate in activities in the outdoors might create a negative cognitive reaction to the outdoors, intern effecting their PL later on in life, for example if they did not meet new people and interact with them because the parents don't want them to join in because they think it is too unsafe, the child will have an emotional dependance for the parents to always tell their child if something is safe or not. While looking at the socio-ecological model of physical activity, it suggests that the biggest barrier that faces facilitators is the worries and concerns from parents, this concern from the parents effect the overall timetable of the child, becoming an indicator of less exposure to more risk motivated activities for example climbing a cliff instead of a man made climbing wall, or kayaking on a river instead of a man made lake purpose built for water craft with little to no unnatural risks that could arise (Martínez-Andrés et al., 2020). Relying on manmade facilities to provide a sense of adventure might decrease the perceived risk and promote an unhealthy relationship with nature, showing that it isn't as fun as being at home and they could find and do that activity at their own local club or play park.

To summarize, becoming a facilitator allows you to enhance the positive outcomes that affect a young child's PL and mitigate the effects or possibilities of negative effects. AA can greatly increase another dimension of PL other then being in the city, experiencing fresh not polluted air, trees, grass, rivers and lakes, all these opportunities are only possible if the facilitator is capable to take advantage of those affordances to provide a wide array of activities allowing the child to explore and discover by themselves. The facilitator also has the role to make the adventurous activity fun so to inspire the enjoyment of PL within an adventurous setting. Through a myriad of different activities, I believe a facilitator can allow a child to engage in

unstructured play, take controlled risks, and challenge themselves physically and mentally. Altogether I believe that the pros of adventurous affordances outweigh the cons of them, providing any sort of adventurous activity will greatly benefit a child's PL, it can positively increase social interaction, teamwork, communication and ultimately a connection with nature, building on a holistic development and overall health and wellbeing.

Word count- 1419

Reference list

- Araújo, D., Brymer, E., Brito, H., Withagen, R. and Davids, K. (2019). The empowering variability of affordances of nature: Why do exercisers feel better after performing the same exercise in natural environments than in indoor environments? *Psychology of Sport and Exercise*, 42, pp.138–145. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.psychsport.2018.12.020>.
- Chong, I. and Proctor, R.W. (2019). On the Evolution of a Radical Concept: Affordances According to Gibson and Their Subsequent Use and Development. *Perspectives on Psychological Science*, 15(1), pp.117–132. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1745691619868207>.
- Fjørtoft, I. (2001). The Natural Environment as a Playground for Children: The Impact of Outdoor Play Activities in Pre-Primary School Children. *Early Childhood Education Journal*, [online] 29(2), pp.111–117. <https://doi.org/10.1023/a:1012576913074>.
- Gibson, J.J. (2015). ~ *Theæ ecological approach to visual perception classic edition*. New York London Psychology Press, Taylor And Francis Group Ann Arbor, Michigan Proquest.
- HM Government (2010). *Equality Act 2010*. [online] [legislation.gov.uk](https://www.legislation.gov.uk). Available at: <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/contents>.
- IPLA (2017). *International Physical Literacy Association*. [online] IPLA. Available at: <https://www.physical-literacy.org.uk/>.
- Joshi, Ni., Rainham, D., Spencer, R., Turner, J., Truong, S. and Stone, M. (2021). How does the outdoor play space afford aspects of physical literacy development? Oral Presentation C9.6. *The Health & Fitness Journal of Canada*, [online] 14(3). <https://doi.org/10.14288/hfjc.v14i3.698>.

Kuo, M., Barnes, M. and Jordan, C. (2019). Do Experiences With Nature Promote Learning? Converging Evidence of a Cause-and-Effect Relationship. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 10(305). <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2019.00305>.

Martínez-Andrés, M., Bartolomé-Gutiérrez, R., Rodríguez-Martín, B., Pardo-Guijarro, M.J., Garrido-Miguel, M. and Martínez-Vizcaíno, V. (2020). Barriers and Facilitators to Leisure Physical Activity in Children: A Qualitative Approach Using the Socio-Ecological Model. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 17(9), p.3033. doi:<https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph17093033>.

Nichols, G. (2000). Risk and adventure education. *Journal of Risk Research*, 3(2), pp.121–134. <https://doi.org/10.1080/136698700376635>.

Priest, S. and Gass, M.A. (2005). *Effective leadership in adventure programming*. 3rd ed. Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics.

Spencer, R.A., Joshi, N., Branje, K., Murray, N., Kirk, S.F. and Stone, M.R. (2021). Early childhood educator perceptions of risky play in an outdoor loose parts intervention. *AIMS Public Health*, [online] 8(2), pp.213–228. <https://doi.org/10.3934/publichealth.2021017>.

Whitehead, M. (2010). *Physical Literacy*. Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203881903>.