

Changemaker – Dr. Mariana Brussoni. Special Feature – ‘Risky play’ policy path.

Mariana Brussoni, Director, Human Early Learning Partnership

Dr. Brussoni is transforming ‘risky play’ policy. Click to this [special section](#) for media and research linked to the new Position Statement by the Canadian Paediatric Society.



Healthy childhood development through outdoor risky play: Navigating the balance with injury prevention.

Canadian Paediatric Society

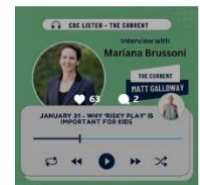
“This statement weighs the burden of play-related injuries alongside the evidence in favour of risky play, including its benefits, risks, and nuances, which can vary depending...”



Why ‘risky play’ is important for kids - Matt Galloway.

CBC News

“The Canadian Paediatric Society says “risky play” is good for kids’ mental, physical and social health — even if it might result in injury. We hear what’s behind this new advice.”



Do you let your kids take risks when they’re playing? Amanda Pfeffer

CBC Ontario Today

“Interview with Dr. Suzanne Beno, paediatric emergency medicine physician at Sick Kids, and Rachel Ramsden, the research coordinator at the Play Outside Lab at UBC.”



Why Canadian pediatricians are encouraging ‘risky play’ for kids - Nathalie Neron, Louis-Philippe Beaudoin.

Global News, the Morning Show

“We have a conversation with behavioural psychologist Dr. Mariana Brussoni and pediatrician Dr. Dina Kulik about the new recommendations from the CPS...”



Let the kids play: Risky activities benefit children, Paediatric Society says - Nathaniel Dove with Dr. Mariana Brussoni.

Global News

“A Toronto city councillor is planning to put forward a motion to reverse a tobogganing ban on 45 hills in the city of Toronto. The city instated the ban earlier in January, due...”



SPECIAL: Changemaker – Dr. Mariana Brussoni

'Risky Play' Policy Path: Transforming Child Health Policy; Helping all Children Thrive

[Pink Sherbet Photography](#)

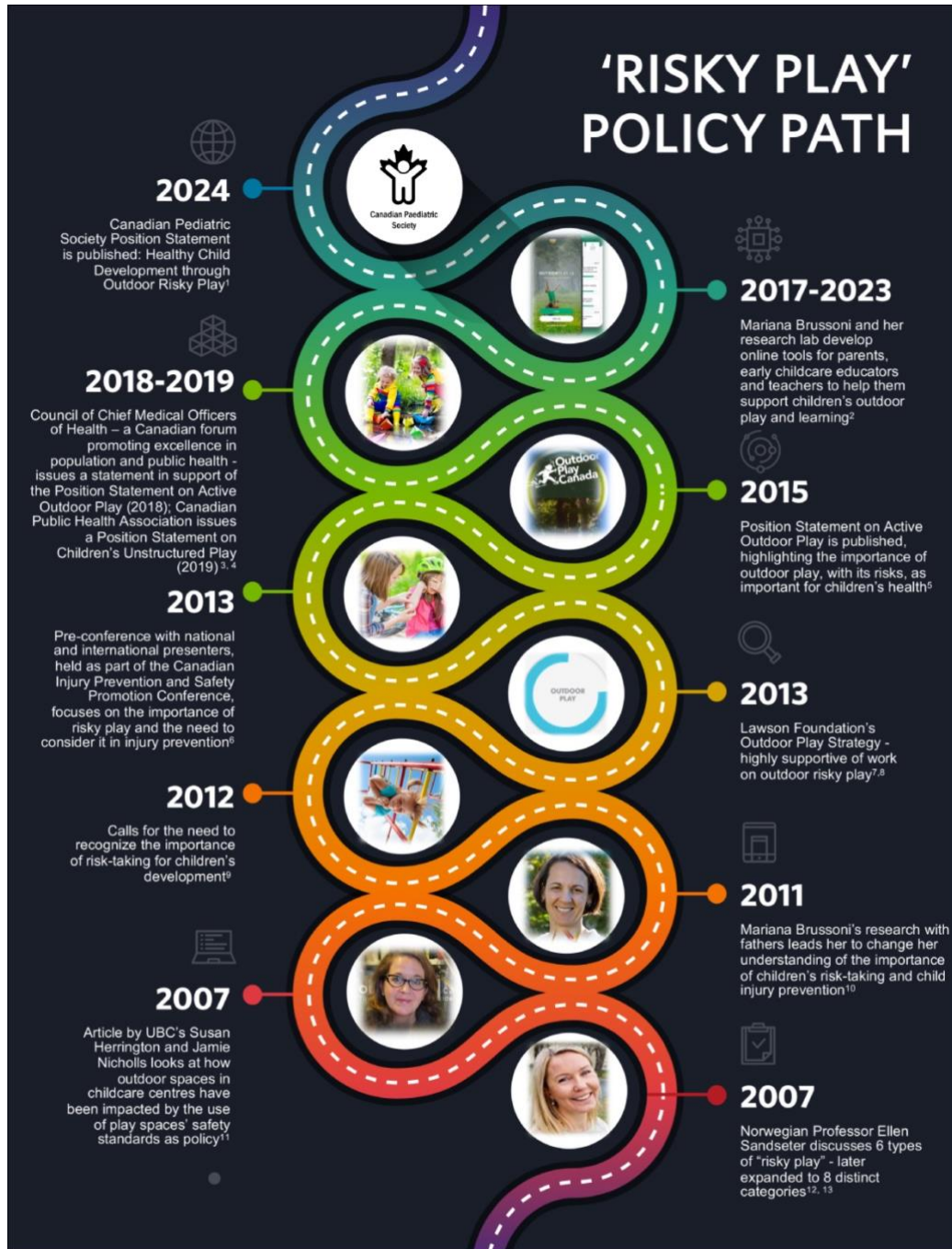
In January 2024, the Canadian Paediatric Society released a position statement, [Healthy childhood development through outdoor risky play: Navigating the balance with injury prevention](#). In it they emphasize the importance of outdoor unstructured risky play for children's development, calling for a shift to a more balanced approach to children's supervision from "as safe as possible" to "as safe as necessary." While play is seen as essential, children's opportunities to play, especially to do so freely, without adult supervision, have decreased over time. The position statement on the importance of outdoor risky play is based on decades of research that has shown outdoor unstructured play – especially the risks that come with it – to be essential to children's development.

One of Canada's foremost contributors to the work, including expert review of the position statement, is Dr. Mariana Brussoni, Director of the Human Early Learning Partnership and Professor in the Department of Pediatrics and the School of Population and Public Health at the University of British Columbia. With a background in developmental psychology and children's injury prevention, Mariana's research has focused on understanding the role that risk-taking can play in children's lives, as well as addressing the factors that can influence children's unstructured, unsupervised outdoor play, including parent and caregiver perceptions of risk, design of outdoor play-friendly environments, and equitable access to outdoor play. After years examining child injury statistics and researching injury prevention, Mariana became interested in the intersection between injury prevention, risk taking and outdoor play, concerned that well-meaning attempts to keep children safe were putting excessive limitations on children's play despite the fact that serious injuries are rare.

In her work, Mariana engages with parents, as well as practitioners and policy makers in early childhood education, schooling, municipal planning and recreation provision, with the aim of creating environments where all children thrive in healthy societies. Her work has been published extensively and has been widely featured in national and international media.

Mariana's research, as well as the research and work of her colleagues, have over time influenced and shaped the understanding of injury prevention and the 'risky play' policy path. Highlights of the policy path for risky play are featured below, with supporting references (Appendix 1) and selected media highlights (Appendix 2). Additional timeline context can be found on the [Outdoor Play Canada website](#).

'Risky Play' Policy Path – Journey highlights



APPENDIX 1: 'Risky Play' Policy Path - Supporting References

1. Canadian Paediatric Society, Beaulieu É, Beno S, Injury Prevention Committee. **Healthy childhood development through outdoor risky play: Navigating the balance with injury prevention**. Ottawa, ON: Canadian Paediatric Society; 2024 Jan 25. Available from: <https://cps.ca/en/documents/position/outdoor-risky-play>.
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3. Council of Chief Medical Officers of Health. **Active outdoor play statement**. Pan-Canadian Public Health Network; 2018 Jun. Available from: <https://www.phn-rsp.ca/en/position-statements/active-outdoor-play-statement.html>.
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13. Kleppe R, Melhuish E, Sandseter EBH. **Identifying and characterizing risky play in the age one-to-three years**. Eur Early Child Educ Res J. 2017;25(3):370-85. Available from: <https://doi.org/10.1080/1350293X.2017.1308163>.

APPENDIX 2: 'Risky Play' Policy Path – Selected Media Highlights from page 2

1. CBC News, The Current. **Why 'risky play' is important for kids - Matt Galloway**. CBC News, The Current. 2024 Jan 31. Available from: <https://www.cbc.ca/listen/live-radio/1-63-the-current/clip/16039002-why-risky-play-important-kids>.
2. CBC News, Ontario Today. **Do you let your kids take risks when they're playing? - Amanda Pfeffer interview with Dr. Suzanne Beno, paediatric emergency medicine physician at Sick Kids, and Rachel Ramsden, research coordinator at the Play Outside Lab at the University of British Columbia with an audio clip of Dr. Mariana Brussoni at the beginning of the segment**. 2024 Jan 30. Available from: <https://www.cbc.ca/listen/live-radio/1-45-ontario-today/clip/16038850-do-let-kids-take-risks-playing>.

3. Global News, The Morning Show. **Why Canadian pediatricians are encouraging ‘risky play’ for kids - Nathalie Neron, Louis-Philippe Beaudoin.** The Morning Show - Parenting Playbook. 2024 Jan 29. Available from: <https://globalnews.ca/video/10257368/why-canadian-pediatricians-are-encouraging-risky-play-for-kids/>.
4. Global News. **Let the kids play: Risky activities benefit children, Paediatric Society says - Nathaniel Dove with Dr. Mariana Brussoni.** Global News. 2024 Jan 26. Available from: <https://globalnews.ca/news/10252699/risky-play-children-pediatric-society/>.

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The Human Early Learning Partnership is situated within the traditional, ancestral and unceded territory of the x^w məθk^w əy’ əm (Musqueam) People.

For more information visit
www.earlylearning.ubc.ca/library/citations

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