

## Positive Risks at Summer Camp

Skyline creates a supportive environment for our campers to take positive risks and make mistakes. We nurture and allow for this as we find it allows our campers to grow and develop resilience.

“Positive risk” means doing activities that we know involve the potential of accidents or outcomes that could include injury, task failure, damage to objects, or embarrassment - but we undertake them nonetheless because they help us to grow. Risk is embraced not for its own sake, but because we know growth requires new challenges, and therein lies risk.

One way to think about positive risk is to consider the categories in the table below. When campers participate in the different categories of risk it leads to growth. Campers develop confidence, resilience, executive function abilities, and risk-assessment skills. Knowing that we create the space for risk at camp, we want to point out some examples of activities that incorporate risk.

<b><u>Play above the ground</u></b> Climbing, jumping from still or flexible surfaces, balancing on high objects, hanging/swinging above the ground <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Tree Climbing</li><li>• Team Building Course</li><li>• Playing in the woods</li></ul>	<b><u>Physical Exertion</u></b> Swinging, sliding, running and high speeds <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Sports</li><li>• Swimming</li><li>• Boating</li><li>• General play and movement around camp</li><li>• Playing in the woods</li></ul>	<b><u>Using tools</u></b> Using tools such as hammers, nails, sports equipment, ropes, kitchen knives, woodburners, hot glue etc. <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Farm and Garden</li><li>• Cooking in the Kitchen</li><li>• Archery</li><li>• Sports</li><li>• Arts and Crafts</li><li>• Playing in the woods</li></ul>
<b><u>Interaction with nature</u></b> Times when campers encounter prickly things, campfires, animals, rocks, water, poison ivy <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Pond</li><li>• Team Building Course</li><li>• Playing in the woods</li><li>• Tree Climbing</li><li>• Crossing the Road</li><li>• Campfires</li></ul>	<b><u>Rough and Tumble Play</u></b> Wrestling, fencing with sticks, play fighting <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Sports and Competition</li><li>• Playing in the woods</li><li>• Swimming</li></ul>	<b><u>Play where campers can “disappear” (e.g. hide and seek)</u></b> Games or activities where campers are close by but unseen, times where campers go with a camper buddy to the bathroom <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Hiking</li><li>• Playing in the woods</li></ul>

For more details on the activities and how we teach risk management please [view this longer document](#). In all activity areas, Skyline staff are present to supervise the play so they can watch for the line between risk that is positive that which approaches carelessness or recklessness. These moments offer opportunities for staff to identify with the campers what those differences are, and how we can make choices accordingly.

Our staff training addresses positive risk explicitly and repeatedly, across the specific and known areas of risk, but also in anticipation of risk emerging in situations that are unpredictable. In addition to the fuller document, we always welcome conversations with families about this and all aspects of our programming.