

WHAT TO SAY INSTEAD OF “BE CAREFUL”

For children to learn how to be aware of risks and how to deal with them, they need exposure to a variety of experiences and environments. The goal is for children to be **aware of their surroundings and able to problem solve for themselves**. Focus on the core skills the child is developing, such as balance, falling, jumping, and when support or intervention is needed either help them problem solve or give tips.

Always ask yourself if intervening is about your needs as the adult or what is best for the child. Consider what is developmentally appropriate for the age of your child. You probably don't want to see your child tumble or hurt themselves, but maybe your child is at an age when they need to do so in order to learn.



This content forms part of a larger booklet entitled “Why Outdoor Play Matters for Children: A practical guide for parents and caregivers”. To see the full booklet, and references, please go to recreationns.ca.

HERE ARE SOME THINGS YOU CAN SAY INSTEAD OF "BE CAREFUL":



- Use your balance! Have a strong belly and look where you are going.
- Bend your knees when you land from the jump.
- If you fall, go floppy and roll.
- Use three points of contact when you're climbing: two hands and one foot, or two feet and one hand.
- Stay focused on what you are doing.
- What is your next move?
- Coming down can be harder than going up. What is your plan?
- Go as high as you are comfortable. I will spot you.
- I am here if you need help.
- How do you plan to get across that?
- Black rocks are slippery, so move slowly and thoughtfully.
- What do we need to know about that frozen puddle? How should we test it out?
- Take your time.
- Think about where and how you might fall if you fall from there.
- Those are sharp rocks, so stay low to the ground and move slowly.
- What can we put there to make that height safe to climb?
- Please move thoughtfully and slowly near the (high ledge, river, ice, etc.).
- Looks like you want to be wild and fast, so let's find more room for that.
- Please find more space away from people for that activity.
- What did you learn from that fall/tumble/slip? Want to try again with me right here?
- How do you think we should do this?