

## The Crucial Role of Climbing and Heavy Work in Early Childhood

Dear Parents,

At SonrisaLandia we believe that when young children take risks with their bodies, they develop critical skills which are needed for everyday life as they get older. We know that for parents, these activities may seem a bit scary for you. Our teachers are trained to know which activities are age appropriate and how to supervise children during these activities so that they remain safe and injury free. However, sometimes accidents do happen. Children may lose their balance, they may trip and fall, or they may drop something, etc. We vow to always keep your child as safe as possible, but we also know how important it is to let the children explore new and different ways to use their bodies. Children from birth to age five grow and develop new skills at a rapid rate and it's often shocking to adults what their capabilities actually are!

**Heavy work** is a term used in early childhood education that refers to activities involving large muscle groups. Heavy work may include pushing, pulling or carrying objects with a little weight, as well as climbing. These activities build the muscles needed for future learning, provide sensory input needed to regulate the nervous system, and help children develop a sense of where their body is in relation to others. \_\_\_\_\_ (initial)

**Climbing** is a skill that infants develop around 8-11 months old, just after crawling, and before walking! The need for climbing does not stop until well into middle childhood. Climbing is the perfect activity for developing physical and cognitive skills. At SonrisaLandia we will provide age-appropriate climbing equipment and will allow children to explore this equipment with a free-range of movement. \_\_\_\_\_ (initial)

Climbing helps develop fine and gross motor skills, by enhancing coordination and balance. It has cognitive benefits for infants, toddlers and young children who develop problem-solving and decision-making abilities as they navigate through obstacles and spatial challenges. When young children are allowed to explore freely they build confidence and independence as they overcome small challenges from an early age. And finally, climbing strengthens their muscles and bones, particularly in their core, arms, and legs.

At SonrisaLandia we create safe spaces for children to climb by making sure the climbing surfaces are stable and placed on carpet so they do not shift while in use. The height will be appropriate for the age group using the equipment, (for example: 21 inches or less for ages 12 months and under), and caregivers will supervise closely without commentary or coaching. Caregivers may help a child down from a climbing structure, if needed, but they will never help them climb up, nor will they lift them on to a climbing structure.

When caregivers allow free range of movement, they significantly contribute to the holistic development of children. We believe that embracing these activities not only enhances physical development but also lays the foundation for social, cognitive, and emotional well-being of our rapidly growing children.

Should a child sustain an injury while at SonrisaLandia, we will always assess the injury, comfort the child, administer the proper first-aid treatment, document the incident, and contact the parents if necessary. Most often, the child will need a hug and an ice pack or bandaid, and will continue on with their day.

I, \_\_\_\_\_ agree that climbing and other heavy work is crucial to  
(print name)  
my child's development, but also understand that this comes with a small risk of injury. I agree to trust the process of development of my child as well as the teachers who are trained to support this process. In the case of injury, I agree to acknowledge that SonrisaLandia and its staff have done everything possible to avoid this situation and should not be held accountable for injuries.

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Dated \_\_\_\_\_

