



Tree Climbing

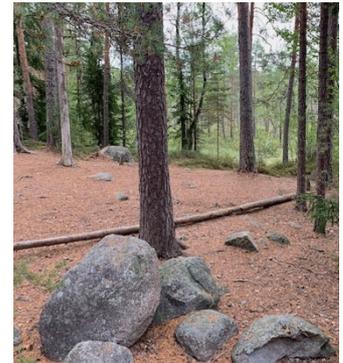
1. Check the tree before climbing. Is it happy and healthy?



- No dead branches
- Bark in good condition (no cracks, splits, fungi, holes)
- No wear and tear – the tree may need to rest and recover
- Branches bigger than your wrists for climbing
- Tree not leaning on something
- If there's nests or wildlife, you find another tree
- Ask the tree **and** check with an adult that it's okay to climb

2. Check the area around the tree

- Soft surfacing underneath is free from rocks and other things that could hurt if you fell onto them.
- Rarer plants and wildlife will not be disturbed (can you find any?)
- No rotting roots
- Tree is not too close to fences, walls, power lines or other things



3. Climbing



- Only climb up what you can climb down
- If the tree is too slippery then don't climb it
- No bunk ups from adults
- Only climb as high as agreed
- Take your time
- You may need to wait to have a turn
- Remember to thank the tree afterwards

Notes for adults

- Trees need to be inspected every visit for environmental and weather changes, wear and tear and presence of wildlife.
- As you get to know a site, establish working rules around tree climbing with children. The above are only to help you get going with tree climbing safely. Start with climbing just one tree, then add in more if needed and you can supervise adequately, in relation to children's tree climbing abilities and the weather/season.
- Children need to be involved in discussions about tree climbing which are practical such as what makes a tree good to climb.
- It may feel a little strange to be asking the tree for permission to climb and thanking it afterwards. However, with very young children, it can help them respect and treat a tree and other species with care. Children learn attitudes and behaviours from adults around them.
- Help children:
 - Recognise a dead branch by its lack of foliage, bark, etc. They can learn to recognise and value healthy trees with buds in winter through practical games.
 - Remember that standing dead wood should not be climbed.
 - Hear the difference between dead wood snapping and greenwood which is much harder to break.
 - Respect children's self-imposed limits on how high they want to climb.
- Look for opportunities to plant trees and care for them whether this back at nursery or in your greenspace. Remember to seek permission, ensure you plant suitable species and put a maintenance plan in place to look after them.
- Trees in school grounds and outdoor spaces should be checked annually by an external specialist to ensure they are healthy. Any tree work needed should be undertaken promptly.