



How to deal with climbing and balancing



Almost all children climb and balance on things as part of their play. Some children seem to want to climb on everything in sight.

Climbing and balancing can happen just about anywhere. It can be a fun part of walks with your child, especially when they are younger. Younger children often enjoy balancing on logs and climbing up onto walls they can walk along. Trees, playgrounds, adventure centres and climbing walls all give different opportunities for climbing.

Some children find every opportunity to climb quite high and seem to enjoy the sense of risk and challenge. Or they might enjoy climbing up high and relaxing, looking down from the branch of a tree or a high platform.

The benefits of climbing and balancing

Your child will benefit from climbing and balancing in all kinds of ways:

- Developing physical skills – such as agility, balance, flexibility and strength
- Learning about their own abilities
- Challenging themselves
- Learning to judge risks
- Learning about the environment.

Things that may concern parents

When children take risks, they are usually good at working out what they can manage. They don't want to hurt themselves. But you might still wonder whether they might fall and what you should do.





Tips for dealing with your concerns

- Try to trust your child's judgement about what they can and can't manage.
- Take a deep breath before reacting.
- Avoid shouting 'be careful!'
- Be aware of things your child may not be able to judge for themselves. For example:
 - When climbing a wall, they may not be able to see if there is a long drop on the other side
 - When climbing a tree, they may not notice branches that are dead or decaying and that could break – they need branches that will take their weight.
- If your child needs help or gets stuck while climbing or balancing, there are some good ways to help:
 - Encourage your child to look for secure places for their hands and feet.
 - Advise your child to take their time and just come one step at a time.
 - Suggest they use the same route down as they used climbing up.
 - Remind them it's not a competition. They don't need to go higher or faster than anyone else – they should just do what feels comfortable for them.



For more ideas, visit our website:
www.playfulchildhoods.wales

