

## The Project Approach to Learning at

**Project Name:** Climbing

**Age Group:** Toddler (16-32 Months)

**Project Start Date:** September 13, 2022

**Project End Date:** September 30, 2022



**RisingOaks**  
Early Learning

**Growing minds through play**

## Background

The toddler room at Rising Oaks-Lincoln Road completed a Climbing Project. It began, August 2022 and continued until September 31, 2022. The educators that assisted the toddlers during this project are: Sarah Simpson RECE, Melissa Strome RECE, John Kessler RECE. The 13 children involved age from 1.5-2.5 years old.

The project began as the educators started observing the toddlers showing more interest in climbing on different furniture in the room and outside. In the room the toddlers would climb up onto the window sills, holding themselves there before jumping back down. They also used the backs of the chairs and child sized couches to climb up onto and stand on. In all of these observations Melissa and Sarah thought it would be a good idea to start a climbing project!

To begin we started by asking the children “what we know” and wrote down their answers.

## Phase 1: Beginning the Project

### What We Know

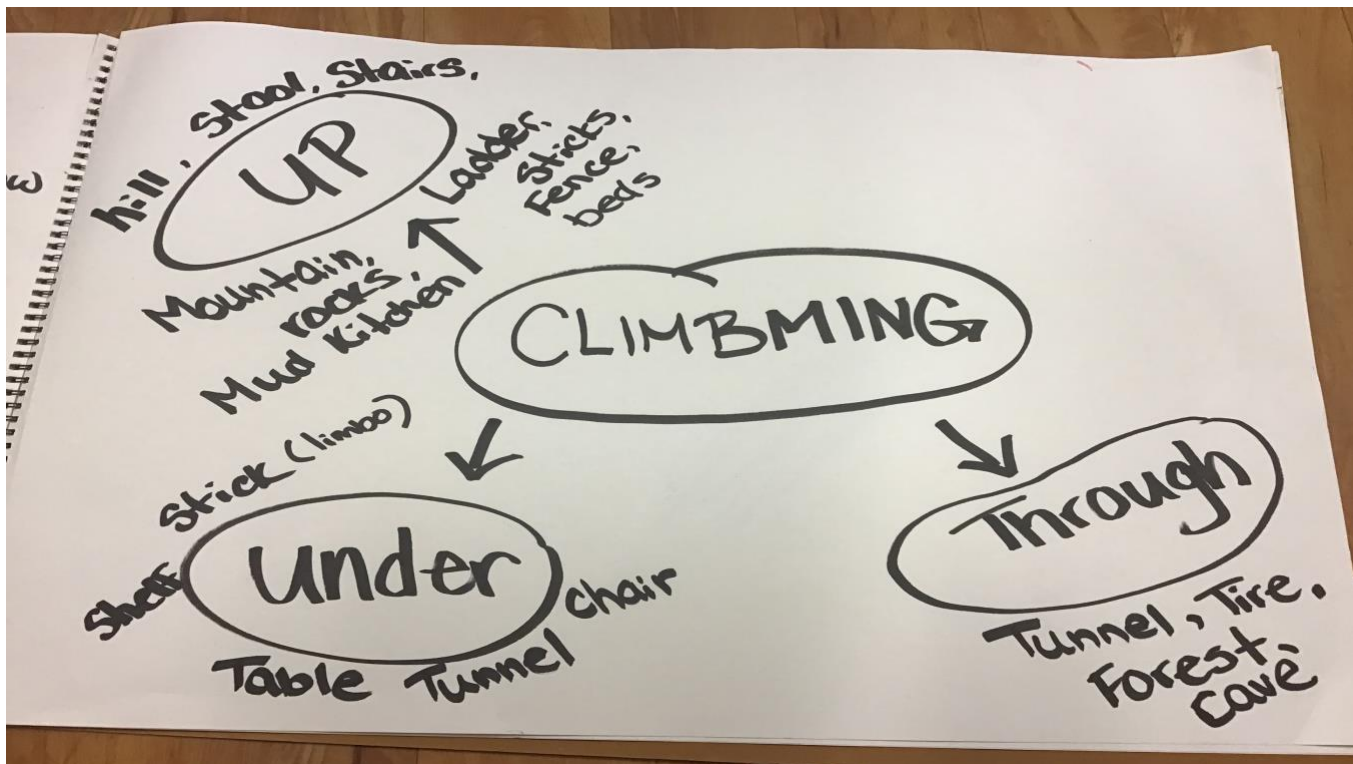
- We climb on the climber
- The playground - Lincoln
- Lily park - Lily M
- We climb the table - Otis
- Lily climb up the ladder - Lily Z

### What We Want to Know

- How do we climb?
- What can we climb?
- What body parts do we use to climb?
- Where is It safe to climb?
- How high can we climb?

### Who We Can Ask

- Brad Simpson
- Otis
- Miranda
- Lisa



### Informal Definition – Climbing

Using our hands and feet to get on, off, through and between different surfaces or areas.

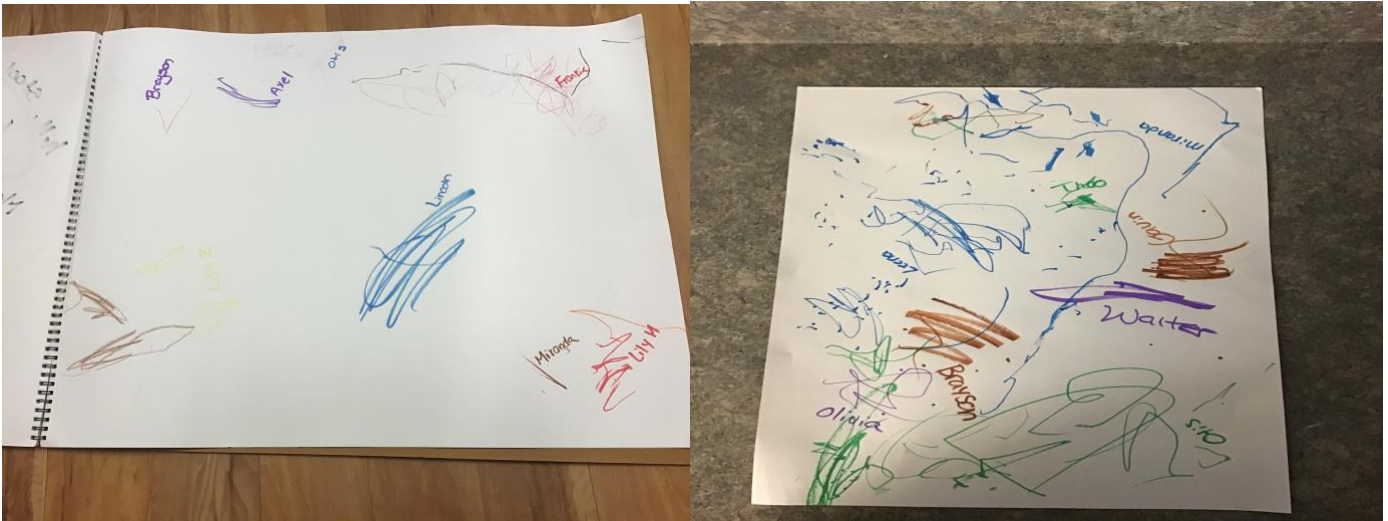
### Formal Definition – Climbing

To ascend, go up, or get to the top of, especially by the use of the hands and feet or feet alone or by continuous or strenuous effort

### Our Climbing Song (tune of row, row, row your boat)

Climb climb climbing high  
Climbing to the sky  
use your muscles and take some risks  
Don't be shy!  
Climb climb climbing high  
use your gross motor abilities  
to see the world and  
reach for the stars  
climbing high and far

## Beginning and Final Drawings:



## Our Climbing Vocabulary

- Up
- Down
- High
- Low
- Climb
- Safely
- Trees
- Ladder
- Ramp

## Phase 2: Developing the Project



September 14 2022 - Sarah Simpson RECE

In tune with our climbing project this month. The toddlers decided to bring out the ladder to climb on, on the playground outside. This was such a hit! The toddlers engaged in muscle strengthening and coordination building as they learned to climb up the steps. This activity also enhanced appropriate risk-taking skills as they maneuvered around what they felt comfortable with and what they knew their bodies could properly do while climbing. (le- climbing up to a certain height before feeling uncomfortable and knowing to stop there).

It was also fun to see the world from a different perspective too! Otis, once he climbed to the top, pointed to rooftops, tree tops and coloured leaves that have already turned. While he pointed he asked Sarah, "what's that?" "Look at those."

Axel also recognized the ladder from his home where his dad had the ladder out during the week. Lincoln exclaimed excitedly as she climbed, "look I'm tall!"

Lily Z., Frankie and Leena practiced going up and back down until they felt comfortable to do it all on their own.

Walter and Brayson tested their risk-taking abilities as they decided they were only comfortable so far to step up one step and not go further.

We are learning our boundaries and what we're comfortable with, and what we are capable of. That helps us make responsible decisions over time and throughout our life.

Overall climbing for us has been a great learning curve and enjoyment for us. We can't wait to keep finding new ways to climb and learn all about climbing in the next couple of weeks!





September 15 2022 - John Kessler RECE

To keep with the theme of the climbing project that we're implementing in the toddler room; the toddlers explored an outdoor obstacle course. The toddlers enjoyed walking across the balance beams, climbing onto the milk crate and jumping into the tire at the end of the obstacle course.

Olivia, Miranda and Axel were very focused when climbing from the milk crate to the balance beams and were able to cautiously navigate the obstacle course all while remembering to take turns. Leena enjoyed navigating the balance beams, jumping into the tire; and then doing it all over again from the start.

This activity can help promote the furthering of gross motor skills, problem solving skills and social skills.



September 20 2022, Melissa Strome RECE

Today the toddlers engaged in a “stair” climbing activity. Educators stacked the wood planks up to create a 4-step staircase. The toddlers then took turns climbing the staircase. Axel climbed up first, he started off on his hands and knees before becoming more comfortable and climbing up on his feet.

Lincoln started going up on her feet and as she got higher up asked to hold an educator’s hands for balance.

Lily Z went up one step at a time by putting one foot in front of the other.

Frankie went up one at a time but ensured both feet were on each step before continuing higher. Lily M & Otis both went up the steps all on their own and were able to keep their balance on the way down the other side.

Miranda climbed up to the second step where she stopped and balanced herself.

Gavin and Brayson used this hands and knees to climb up on their own then asked for help going down on their feet.

Leena held an educator’s hand to help her stay balanced as she crossed the steps. Stéphane was able to balance himself and climb up on his feet. To go down, he used his hands and knees to keep his balance.

Walter explored the steps and placed wood logs onto the steps.

Once the children were finished exploring the steps we created a deck like base. Walter enjoyed climbing on this platform rather than the steps. The wider base offered the children a more comfortable platform to practice balancing on.

During the activity Lincoln, Miranda, Otis, Lily Z & Lily M said they were going, “so tall.”



The children tested their balancing abilities as we noticed them using an educator for support at first then trying the steps on their own. The children are becoming better climbers each day and we are starting to notice them become more comfortable climbing more difficult structures.



September 22 2022, Melissa Strome RECE

Today the toddlers climbed onto the green box.

Lily Z, Olivia, Lily M, Otis and Axel often climb into the green bucket when it is flipped right side up. When we got to the playground Lily Z headed for the bucket.

Melissa asked, "would you like to climb into the bin or on top of it?"

Lily Z said, "on."

Then we asked Lincoln and she said, "on the top."

We took the bucket to the fence and flipped it over. The children began climbing up and holding the fence for support.

Walter was patient and waited as his friends climbed up, once he went up he looked out to the parking lot and pointed to the cars.

Olivia began brushing the trees with her hands and feeling them poke her. Olivia was then joined by Otis, they went up together and were talking about the cars.

Lincoln enjoyed climbing up & jumped off the edge.

Lily Z held the fence tightly then jumped off with Melissa's help.



We used the bucket in a different way than we are used to & got to see the parking lot from a different point of view.



September 23 2022, Melissa Strome RECE

This morning Melissa was organizing and tidying up the playground. Melissa piled up 9 tires in the middle of the playground and went back to put away some wood pieces. When she walked away she heard laughing from behind her.

Lincoln, Lily M and Otis had run over to the tires and began climbing them! They each climbed into the center of a stack of 2 tires. Lily M then climbed into the center tire stack and crouched down. Lincoln said, "Lily where are you?"

Lily popped her head up and said, "boo."

Lincoln and Otis leaned over to look at Lily M.

As the children were climbing and exploring the tire pile, Melissa heard them talking.

Lincoln said, "I climb up," as she's climbed the tires.

Otis said, "I climb in I go in there," as he lowered his body into the center of the tire. While he sat on the edge of a tire he said, "I go on my tire!"

Lily Z then joined the climbing fun. She came over and said, "go up," as she climbed into the tires. While she was climbing up she said, "I get this," and "I climbing."

Lincoln climbed into the center tire to play peek a boo. When she was ready to come out she began climbing the tire and said, "up, up, up." She stood on the bottom rim of the tire and said, "I need help climbing out!" She took Melissa's hand and climbed out of the tire. As Lincoln climbed out of the center tire, Lily Z said, "I climb out too!"

The children spent most of the morning outdoor time climbing, playing peek a boo, and exploring the newly set up tire pile. They used their gross motor skills to climb in, out and on top of the tires and used their climbing vocabulary to tell each other what they were doing!



September 30 2022, Melissa Strome RECE

The toddlers went for a walk to the big hill by the parking lot. Once there, they began running up and down the hill. The children found going down the hill easier than going up based on their body language.

Otis laid down and rolled his body down the hill.

Axel and Stéphane decided to try this too and got to the bottom by rolling. Lincoln, Lily Z, and Gavin walked steadily and slowly down the hill to the bottom. Otis and Leena held hands as they walked up and down the hill.

Sarah stood at the bottom of the hill and watched as the children worked their way down to the bottom. The toddlers then used their gross motor skills to climb back up the hill. The toddlers used their hands and feet to get themselves back to the top. Such fun!

### Phase 3: Concluding the Project

We knew it was time to conclude the project when the toddlers became less interested in the climbing experiences we were providing. Toddlers will always be interested in climbing and seek out climbing experiences as we have seen post project.

Our final climbing experience was all natural at the big hill. The toddlers used their gross motor muscles to climb up and down the hill. They found new ways to climb down the hill such as scooching on their bums or rolling on their sides.

The children used their vocabulary words such as, climb, up, down, showing their educators what they retained over the course of the project.

## Teacher Reflections

At the beginning of this project, I was unsure about it. A lot of the toddlers in our room were showing fear in the risky play aspect of climbing.

We had a lot of busy-bodied toddlers, who loved to explore through rough and tumble play but weren't sure how far they could risk their motor skills with climbing.

I think the initial idea for this project began from the following observation. We had a lot of toddlers wanting to learn how to push their motor skills to the next level. They would constantly show us they were interested in smaller stepping activities, like stepping up onto the stepping stones or wooden logs outside. Once we saw this interest we began introducing new levels of risk.

We brought in ideas like obstacle courses where they had to maneuver their bodies around a lot of different heights and obstacles that pushed new learning. Once this was discovered the toddlers' love for climbing feathered and we began trying new and exciting ideas. It was an eye opener as an educator to see the effects of taking proper steps to scaffold and risk taking the toddlers through their learning to watch them acquire new skills and appreciation for their own learning and development. To see a sense of pride within the children and watch as their curiosity and enjoyment grew within this realm of learning. Like they saw toddlers learn 90 % from the neck down. Movement is 90 percent of their day to day process of learning.

Sarah Simpson RECE

This project was so fun! It was fun to see how the children became more confident in their climbing abilities.

Closer to the end of the project, I noticed children who had been timider or asking for assistance while climbing, try to climb different objects on their own. I was able to see how proud and accomplished the children felt by the looks on their faces. The children would climb to the top of the ladder, wood planks or through obstacles and have bright faces showing me how proud they were. The toddlers continue seeking out different objects they can climb in the classroom and out on the playground.

Melissa Strome RECE

The toddlers are fascinated by climbing and risky play and are always finding new ways to explore them.



The toddlers learned about various objects that they could climb and different ways in which they could climb them. To begin the project, the toddlers were invited to name different things we could climb, different methods to climbing and all things surrounding climbing that they already were knowledgeable of. The toddlers enjoyed climbing ladders and being able to climb to the top rungs of the ladder to explore the view from up there in comparison with their view from the ground. Another activity in which the toddlers engaged was an obstacle course with wooden balance beams which allowed the toddlers to use their gross motor skills and balancing skills.

John Kessler RECE