



Benefits of Outdoor Play

There are many real benefits to allowing your children to go outside. Children should be active for an hour every day. Outdoor activities get children moving and get their hearts pumping. Outdoor play also allows for children to develop physical skills that are important for coordination and growth. When children are given the opportunity to play outdoors, they can actively practice jumping, throwing, skipping, climbing, and running. ***But there are lots of other benefits too!***

Executive Functioning and Imagination

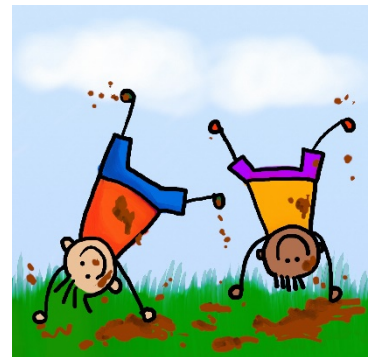
The ability to multitask and plan are examples of executive functioning skills that children practice as they play outdoors. They find ways to keep themselves occupied and entertained by creating games and inventing their own rules. In this age where technology rules, many children would rather watch television than go outside and play. Outdoor play encourages children to use their imagination, another important life skill.

Problem Solving and Cooperation

Many outdoor activities also promote problem solving skills and cooperation. If they are learning how to get along with others or trying to figure out the best way to create a hopscotch board, they are involved in problem solving. When children share limited resources, they are learning how to prioritize their time as well as how to interact with and treat other people. These socialization skills help children as they move onto new settings, such as new classrooms.

Physical, Mental, & Emotional Health

A child's body works best when they can get outside in the sunshine every day. Our bodies need the sun to make Vitamin D, which plays an important part in many body processes. With just 10-15 minutes a day, Vitamin D can help promote energy levels, memory, better moods, and healthy sleep. By letting your children play outside in dirt, you are also helping them to build their immune system. Exposure to some germs is essential for a child's development. In fact, research shows that children who have regular contact with grass, dirt, trees, and snow are less likely to develop allergies and autoimmune disorders.





Learning about the Physical World

One of the most important things children can learn from spending time outdoors is a respect for nature. They learn about the physical world in a way that they are likely to remember because it is concrete – meaning that it happens right in front of them. They can find the answers to their questions about the world. What happens to the ground on a rainy day? Where do worms go when it's hot? What does a bird use to build a nest? Why does my scooter move slowly on grass? Encouraging your child to experience this constructive play allows them to be in control of their own learning.

So don't forget to take your child outside every day!