

The Importance of Outdoor Play

The weather is warming up and it is getting to be that time of year again when **children can play outdoors for longer periods of time!** Playing outdoors is critical for children and some of the reasons include:

- **Practice and Master Emerging Physical Skills-**

It is the very **best place** for preschoolers to **practice and master emerging physical skills-** running, leaping, jumping, throwing, catching, striking, pushing a swing, pulling a wagon, and lifting and carrying movable objects.

- **Best Place to Burn the Most Calories-**

It is the very **best place to burn the most calories**, which helps prevent obesity, a heart disease risk factor that has doubled in the past decade.

- **Contributes to Learning-**

Outdoor play **contributes to learning** in the areas of:

- Cognitive
- Social/emotional development
- Communication skills
- Vocabulary

Learning takes place through:

- Children inventing games
- Children modifying games
- Children enforcing rules
- Children learning number relationships (as they keep score and count)
- Children learning social customs (as they learn to play together and cooperate)

- **Helps Children Burn Extra Energy**

Children need to **burn extra steam** or “**let off steam.**” Outdoor play enables children to “**recharge their batteries.**” They will **learn better** and **sleep better.**

- **Helps Children Stay Healthy**

Outdoor play **helps children stay healthy**, not just physically but it **helps with bacteria and virus** too!

Outdoor play **enables the infectious agents to spread out** and be dissipated; it also enables children to get fresh air and exercise and to be less constrained.

Outdoor play is important for children, so take your child outdoors as much as possible!

Resources

http://www.earlychildhoodnews.com/earlychildhood/article_view.aspx?ArticleID=275

<http://www.communityplaythings.com/resources/articles/2010/outdoor-play>