

The Importance of Getting Outside

With the current times and many children participating in online schooling it is important to have children play outside. Many children have been required to be in front of computer screens for long periods of time since the COVID-19 pandemic began in March 2020. Now, more than ever, we need to remind our children to get up and play outside when they can.

Here are some reasons why it is important to get outside every day.

Exercise

Children should be active for at least one hour a day and what better way to do this than playing outside! When outdoors you can run, jump, crawl, walk, whatever you want! It's easy to get your daily exercise while playing outdoors.

Sunshine

Did you know your body needs Vitamin D? Sunshine can provide us with what our bodies need to make Vitamin D! Our bodies need this so we can build our immune system and for bone development. However, remember to always wear sunscreens to protect your skin from UV rays!

Cognitive and social development

When children are able to play outside in an unstructured environment, they are building their cognitive skills. They are using their imagination and exploration skills. If they are playing outside with siblings, friends, or at the park with other children they are building their social skills.

Psychological effects of the color green

Did you know that colors have an effect on your emotions? Green is known to be a calming color bringing on emotions of peace, and harmony. When we surround ourselves with the color green it can help to keep our emotions level and help us feel at peace. When we are outside, we are surrounded by the color green (i.e. trees, grass, etc.) thus bringing a sense of harmony and a feeling of refreshment.

Here are some ways you can encourage your child to go outside and play

1. Schedule play dates. Ask your kid and their friend to the park or the playground so they can play together. This will also increase their social skills.

2. Only allow a set amount of screen time (aside from their online learning) and once that time is up encourage them to play outside. On the opposite side, allow them to play outside and once they come in they can have a set amount of screen time (to watch tv, play games, etc.).
3. Have outside play toys on hand. For example balls, jump ropes, scooters, bikes, sidewalk chalk, etc. so they have something to play with.
4. Go on walks with your kids. Walk them to/from school or go on a walk around the block after dinner.
5. Encourage your children that it's okay to get dirty, wet, etc. Let them know they can play outside and they don't have to worry about getting in trouble for getting their clothes dirty.
6. Know what your child likes to do and give them the opportunity to do those activities outside.
7. Take your favorite book outside to read. This is a great way to encourage some kids (and adults) to get outside.

Overall, it is very important for our children, and ourselves, to get outside and play every day. We are living during a time that many of us are forced to spend hours behind a computer screen, so it is more important now, more than ever, to get outside and get some sunshine! So find your favorite place, plan a fun activity, grab your book, and head outside!

Sources

<https://www.health.harvard.edu/blog/6-reasons-children-need-to-play-outside-2018052213880>

<https://news.sanfordhealth.org/childrens/play-outside/>

Between Families Newsletter
Get up, get out, and play

PLEASE COMPLETE THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONNAIRE FOR ½ HOUR CREDIT.

1. List 3 things you can do outside with your children:
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2. What color brings feelings of peace and calming?
3. What is one way to encourage your child to get outside?
4. When children are able to play outside in an unstructured environment, they are building their _____ skills.
5. Sunshine provides your body with Vitamin ____?
6. How long should children play outside during a day?
7. When your child is outside playing with friends they are building their _____ skills.
8. Vitamin D helps build your immune system and your _____ development.

9. The color green can bring us a sense of harmony and feelings of being _____.

10. What are two reasons why it is important to encourage our kids to go outside?