

Playing is Learning:

The benefits of outdoor play with children

The weather is getting warmer and families are spending more time outdoors. This gives families more opportunities to use outdoor play as teachable moments. Playing is part of learning and advancing a child's development. When children play outside, they are able to learn by exploring the world around them. Below is a list of a few benefits associated with outdoor play.



Children learn science:

Science lessons are all around children when they are outdoors. Children can bring you discoveries they find through a nature scavenger hunt to start a conversation. A dandelion picked by a child can open a conversation of questions. For example, "Why do you think dandelions turn white? Do you think this is a weed or flower?"

Children can choose and build confidence

There are many less structured ways to interact with the outdoors than most indoor activities. Letting your child choose how they interact with the outdoors helps them build confidence.

Creativity & Imagination:

Unstructured style play allows children to think more freely, create their own style of play, and try new ways to approach nature in imaginative ways.

Outdoors provide a new environment for learning

Activities can be created outside differently than inside. Think of creative and engaging activities that fit your child's need to move and fit their interest. For example, if your child loves art you can collect different sticks and leaves and use them as natural paintbrushes with finger paint.

Physical Activity

Outdoor play builds a variety of gross motor skills including running, climbing, and jumping.

Books can come to life outside

For example, a butterfly in the yard can create the questions and conversation with children such as "I wonder what that butterfly is looking for in the flower? Does she look like the butterfly we read about earlier?" Children develop knowledge about their world when they have a chance to watch, observe, predict, and learn in the moment.