



PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

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With an Improving Understanding of MCH grant, FamilyVoices IMPACT works to develop ways to improve health and wellness for all children and families, and to encourage partnerships between families and professionals for children's good health. www.familyvoices.org and www.brightfuturesforfamilies.org. This digest is funded by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services—Health Resources and Services Administration—Maternal and Child Health Bureau, Division of Child, Adolescent, and Family Health UCMC21535.

C'mon! Let's Go Outside and Play!

Fresh air, sunshine, and kids--what a great combination! The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) recommends an hour of active play every day and that children play outside as much as possible. It helps burn calories to achieve and maintain healthy weight, and it's good for emotional health and well-being, too.

A recent study looked at preschoolers and outdoor play and found that half of the 8,950 preschoolers in the study did not have at least one family-supervised outdoor play period each day.

Researchers found:

- Decreased outdoor time was not related to excessive screen time (computers, TVs, etc.).
- Asian, African American, and Hispanic mothers were 20-49% less likely to take children outdoors than Caucasian mothers.
- Preschoolers with three or more playmates were twice as likely to play outdoors.
- Girls are less likely to play outside than boys, and mothers take children out less often than fathers.
- Mothers who exercise regularly were 50% more likely to take their children outdoors daily than mothers who don't exercise.

Sometimes It's Not Easy

There are valid reasons why parents and other adult family members might not take their children outside every day--work schedules, weather, availability of a safe outdoor play environment, and even special health care issues such as allergies, asthma, or physical limitations can make outdoor play a challenge. So what can families do?

- Ask how much outdoor play time children in daycare get.
- Encourage and support girls in outdoor active play.
- Take a flashlight walk or rainy day hike and invite friends!
- Encourage community leaders to consider building safe playgrounds--and make them accessible to all children, including those with disabilities.

To read the study, go to: <http://archpedi.jamanetwork.com/article.aspx?articleid=1149487>

Plant a Garden!

Gardening gets families outside year-round and provides healthy food, too! For tips, go to: http://eartheasy.com/grow_gardening_children.htm

