

Research Related to **Nature Preschool**

What are the benefits of going outside & experiencing nature?

1. It relieves stress.
2. It reduces illness and increases illness recovery.
3. Studies show the amount of TV kids watch correlates directly to body fat. There are no TVs in nature!
4. It reduces behavioral disorders, anxiety, and depression in children.
5. You'll make more friends!
6. Awakens the senses.
7. It provides direct experience with the world.
8. Increases problem solving abilities.
9. Stimulates creativity.
10. Quiet, peaceful refuge from a busy day.
11. Reduces the symptoms of ADHD in children.
12. Minimizes work frustration and increases employee enthusiasm.
13. Renews our sense of wonder.
14. Builds community.
15. Outdoor air is cleaner!
16. To learn about nature.
17. Spending time with family.

Nature Deficit Disorder & the Health of Our Children

- “Nature-deficit disorder” refers to the negative impacts of lack of outdoor time. (Louv, 2005)
- Due to television, formally scheduled activities, and other factors, children are not playing outside as much as previous generations. (Clements, 2004; Rivkin, 1997; Rivkin, 2000)
- Children have the right to play in the natural environment. (United Nations, 1989; Nabhan & Trimble, 1994)
- Unstructured play is critical to a child’s cognitive, physical, social, and emotional development. (Ginsburg, 2006)
- Nature stimulates play and learning by engaging all the senses. (Moore & Cosco, 2006; Rivkin, 1997; Wilson, 1995b; Hart, 1979)
- The prevalence of overweight among children in the United State is continuing to increase, especially among Mexican-American and non-Hispanic black adolescents. (Ogden, Flegal, Carroll & Johnson, 2002, p. 1728)
- Higher levels of physical activity during childhood leads to children acquiring less both fat by the time they reach early adolescence. High levels of physical activity in the preschool years may in fact delay the onset of rapidly increasing body fat that generally occurs between 4 and 6 years of age. (Moore, et al., 2003)
- Exposure to nature—directly or through a window—is beneficial to one’s health. (Kaplan et al, 1998; Taylor et al, 2001; Wells, 2000; Wells et al, 2003)
- Having nature nearby buffers the impact of stressful life events in rural children. (Wells & Evans, 2003)

Early Childhood & Nature-Based Preschools

- Daily play experiences in a natural area significantly increase balance and coordination among kindergarteners. (Fjortoft, 2001)
- Schoolgrounds are critical to the educational experience. (Moore & Cosco, 2006; Wilson, 1996b; Basile, White & Robinson, 2000)
- The level of vegetation in play areas makes a significant difference in the incidence of play, with more play occurring in high-vegetation spaces. (Taylor, Wiley, Kuo, & Sullivan, 1998)
- In a study of physical activity among preschool children, childcare center was found to be the highest individual predictor of activity. (Finn, Johansen & Specker, 2002)
- A child’s desire to connect with nature is more strongly tied to the philosophy of the school than lack of natural spaces. (Malone & Tranter, 2003)

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