



Go Outside!

The Benefits of Outside Play



Outdoor play is essential for children's healthy growth and development. Time spent outside encourages physical activity such as running, climbing, and jumping, which supports large muscle development and overall fitness. Fresh air and open space also helps children release energy, improving focus, behavior, and attention when they return indoors.

Beyond physical benefits, outdoor play promotes social skills, problem-solving, creativity, and an appreciation for nature. These experiences support children's emotional well-being and contribute to a safe, balanced, and enriching learning environment.



Licensing Rules

All child care learning centers and family child care learning homes are required to provide outdoor play daily, weather permitting. Child care learning centers open 5 hours or more per day are required to provide at least 1 hour daily for infants and 1.5 hours daily for all other ages.



Best Practices

Outdoor gross motor free play should be provided daily, with at least one hour in the morning and one hour in the afternoon, weather permitting. When weather conditions do not permit outdoor play, a safe indoor space should be provided for gross motor play.



Weather Permitting

Children should be dressed appropriately and participate in outdoor play unless there is active precipitation, a public health advisory requiring indoor activity, or extremely hot or cold temperatures as indicated on the Weather Watch Chart.



Gross Motor Skills

Outdoor play promotes physical fitness and gives children an opportunity to use large muscle skills that are not possible to use safely in the classroom, such as running, jumping, skipping, and climbing.



Positive Behavior Outcomes

Engaging in outdoor play helps children release excess energy, remain more attentive during indoor learning, and reduce rough play that can lead to injuries in the classroom. These positive outcomes contribute to a calmer, more focused classroom environment.



Additional Resources

