



A Collaborative Program of  
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Dimensions Educational Research Foundation

## Did You Know?

### **...Going outside helps children with attention problems**

Recent research studies reveal that the symptoms of children with ADHD are relieved after contact with nature. The greener the setting, the more the relief. Another study found that every hour preschoolers watch TV each day boosts their chances for developing attention problems later in life, suggesting that the fast-paced moving images on TV might over stimulate and “rewire” the developing brain. (Pediatrics Journal)

### **...Nature builds skills, skills, and more skills**

Children who have frequent experiences with the natural world show better coordination, balance and agility...more creativity, increased performance on math and science tests...and higher skills in cooperative play and conflict resolution. (Fjortoft 2001, Crain 2001, Louv, 2006, Miller, 2007)

### **...Time outdoors may actually help prevent allergies and asthma?**

Asthma among children has increased 87% since 1982. Interestingly enough indoor air quality has been found to have 2-5 times more pollutants than outdoor air quality levels. An environmental health report notes that most people, including children, spend 90% of their time indoors. Dr. Dennis Ownby says that “maybe part of the reason we have so many children with allergies and asthma is that we live too clean a life.”

### **... Exposure to sunlight has a host of benefits**

“Being out in the sun boosts our mood, improves sleep, and promotes vitamin D production,” says James Spencer, associate clinical professor of dermatology at Mt. Sinai School of Medicine in New York. Ultraviolet (UV) rays from sunlight trigger vitamin D synthesis in the skin that is necessary for strong bones. Experts now believe that sunlight has widespread mood-elevating effects, possibly because the “happy” hormone serotonin increases.

### **...For children, play is like eating and sleeping---one of the vital signs of health**

Free, imaginative play is crucial for normal social, emotional and cognitive development. It makes us better adjusted, smarter and less stressed (Scientific American , 2009)

### **... Playing outside can be safe and that some risk is necessary for children to develop**

People are afraid of accidents in play and want to minimize risk. Yet playgrounds that offer genuine risk tend to have fewer accidents than traditional playgrounds. When children are given real risk and they learn how to handle it. (Almon in Exchange, March 2009)

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