

Benefits of Being Outside

Here at Holly Ridge Center, we are huge supporters of outside play for individuals of all ages. Besides the fact many of us are in front of screens, being outside can be a fresh breath of air and fun. Simple activities such as digging in the dirt to find a worm, blowing bubbles in the wind, running through the sprinklers in the grass, kicking and throwing balls, smelling flowers, climbing trees, and jumping in puddles can support development across the different senses: seeing, hearing, touching, taste, smelling and proprioceptive. We all learn through our senses, especially babies and toddlers. Our senses are the primary way we gain information about the world and experience the world. Studies have shown that 60 minutes a day outside can have multiple benefits for our children and adults!



1. Studies have shown being outside can help set your circadian rhythm cycle. Being outside gives you exposure to Vitamin D (up here in the Pacific Northwest, some people lack sufficient Vitamin D, always talk with your PCP regarding Vitamin D levels). Both can help good sleep routines and a sleepy child at bedtime (Harvey Karp, Happiest Baby on the Block).

2. Provides opportunities for motor and sensory development as well as building muscle strength. It also increases your activity level, which

positively impacts health (NAYEC).

3. Provides opportunities for socializing with peers of different ages and other adults.

4. When playing outside on playground equipment, learning to ride a bike or scooter, crossing a path of fallen logs, or climbing a tree, children engage in risk-taking in a safe environment with supervised adults close by (NAYEC).

5. Problem-solving skills are challenged organically when outside, for example: How are you getting down from this platform on the playground? How do you cross this creek or the stream of water on the beach?

6. Building a garden or partaking in outdoor chores can help promote appreciation of nature and a sense of responsibility in taking care of the beautiful planet we live on, as well as bonding with our loved ones.



7. Being outside and active for 60 minutes a day can decrease obesity in young children (CDC).



Sources: The Happiest Baby on the Block by Harvey Karp, MD;

<https://www.naeyc.org/resources/pubs/yc/may2019/outdoor-play-is-essential>

<https://www.cdc.gov/healthyweight/children/index.html>