

MILFORD FAMILY RESOURCE CENTER

The Infant and Toddler Times

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Dates to Remember

June

21st. *Happy Summer*



July

4th. *Independence Day*



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The benefits of outdoor play

1. It invites children to learn science

As seen in the opening vignette, you don't have to plan for science lessons when you take young children outside. Children are natural explorers and discoverers, and you can bring whatever interests them back to your early childhood setting for further exploration. By turning their questions into group inquiry projects, you'll soon have several starting points for emergent curriculum. An acorn won't grow quickly enough to satisfy a curious child - it takes two months for the first shoots to appear! But there are faster-growing seeds (peas, green beans, corn) perfect for classroom experiments. Picture books like *The Carrot Seed*, by Ruth Krauss, and *Growing Vegetable Soup*, by Lois Ehlert, add early literacy to the mix while building children's vocabulary and knowledge.

2. It creates opportunities for social interaction and collaboration

One-on-one interactions, like the conversation between Aisha and Marissa in the vignette, help build a foundation for future teacher relationships that will occur when children enter school. Marissa's interest and delight in Aisha's discovery reinforce Aisha's knowledge that she's important and her ideas matter. Outdoor play also provides a chance to practice social and emotional skills with other children, including problem solving, turn taking, encouragement, self-control, safe risk taking, and following the rules of a game. And outdoor play provides opportunities to develop empathy; for example, imagine one child encouraging another to try the slide or a child comforting another who has fallen down while running.

3. It promotes physical health

The obesity rate for US children ages 2 to 5 is 14 percent, rising to over 40 percent for middle-aged adults, leading to an increased risk of health problems like diabetes and heart disease (Hales et al. 2017). That's one reason why the American Academy of Pediatrics recommends a "prescription for play" at every well-child visit through age 2 (Yogman et al. 2018, 10) and Nemours Health and Prevention Services recommends daily, supervised outdoor time for children from birth to age 5 (Hughes 2009). Specifically, Nemours calls for toddlers to have at least 30 minutes of structured (adult-led) physical activity and at least an hour of unstructured (child-led) physical activity each day. Outdoor play is a great way to model the joy of physical activity. When kids run, jump, climb, throw and kick balls, and ride toys that require balance, they also build gross motor skills and start developing a habit of being active.

4. It invites new contexts for learning

You can use outdoor spaces to create intentional learning activities that are difficult to execute inside. There's great value in looking at books about nature in the shade of a tree, pouring (and splashing!) water at an outdoor water table, building extra large structures in the sandbox or mud, collecting leaves, watching a parade of ants, and playing pretend on a playground structure. To

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make the most of your outdoor time, think about creative, joyful, engaging activities that capitalize on children's need to move and enthusiasm for doing so, while also achieving other curricular goals. For example, you might create a sorting game in which children have to find all the yellow balls and all the red balls hidden on the playground, then sort them into two groups.

5. It promotes better sleep

A study of 2- to 5-year-olds showed that children who play outdoors sleep better at night (Deziel 2017). This may be due to the physical activity, stress reduction, and exposure to natural light that come with playing outdoors (Coyle 2011). You may want to share this information with families—a tired, happy child is one who sleeps well!

6. It gives children a chance to take appropriate risks

Toddlers are all about challenging themselves to do new and difficult things—pet a dog, climb some stairs, venture a little farther away from a caregiver and then return. Playing outside provides opportunities to run faster, climb higher, jump farther, and more—all under the watchful eye of a caring adult.

7. It may lead to better learning outcomes once children return to other activities

Research shows that older children are more attentive and productive in the classroom when recess—indoors or outdoors—is part of the school day (Council on School Health 2013). If older children need a brain break, it follows that younger ones do too.

8. It supports STEM skills

Remember making mud pies and forts when you were a child? The outdoors is the perfect place for big (and messy) projects that support STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) skills, such as building, sand and water play, and investigations of the natural world. Almost any indoor activity can be brought outside for further exploration.

9. It anchors children to the real world

Talking with a child about an illustration of a bird in a picture book is good, but sharing the book and the experience in the real world is even better: “I wonder what that robin is looking for in the grass? Oh, look! It got a worm!” Children develop more comprehensive knowledge about their world when they have a chance to watch, observe, predict, and learn in the moment.

Conclusion

Playing outdoors has benefits for both young children and educators. It's a refreshing pause in the day's schedule—time set aside to look and listen, explore and observe, move and let loose. Time spent outside can lead to better physical and mental health, improved sleep, and cognitive, social, and emotional gains for young children. Ensuring that outdoor play is an integral part of your child care and education setting's daily schedule supports early learning across all domains and unleashes a whole lot of joy—for you and for children!

(from NAEYC Young Children May 2019 Vol. 74, No. 2)



How Can I Protect My Children from the Sun?

Your children's skin needs protection from the sun's harmful ultraviolet (UV) rays whenever they're outdoors.

Just a few serious sunburns can increase your child's risk of skin cancer later in life. Kids don't have to be at the pool, beach, or on vacation to get too much sun. Their skin needs protection from the sun's harmful ultraviolet (UV) rays whenever they're outdoors.

Seek shade. UV rays are strongest and most harmful during midday, so it's best to plan indoor activities then. If this is not possible, seek shade under a tree, an umbrella, or a pop-up tent. Use these options to prevent sunburn, not to seek relief after it's happened.

Cover up. When possible, long-sleeved shirts and long pants and skirts can provide protection from UV rays. Clothes made from tightly woven fabric offer the best protection. A wet T-shirt offers much less UV protection than a dry one, and darker colors may offer more protection than lighter colors. Some clothing certified under international standards comes with information on its ultraviolet protection factor.

Get a hat. Hats that shade the face, scalp, ears, and neck are easy to use and give great protection. Baseball caps are popular among kids, but they don't protect their ears and neck. If your child chooses a cap, be sure to protect exposed areas with sunscreen.

Wear sunglasses. They protect your child's eyes from UV rays, which can lead to cataracts later in life. Look for sunglasses that wrap around and block as close to 100% of both UVA and UVB rays as possible.

Apply sunscreen. Use sunscreen with at least SPF 30 and UVA and UVB (broad spectrum) protection every time your child goes outside. For the best protection, apply sunscreen generously 30 minutes before going outdoors. Don't forget to protect ears, noses, lips, and the tops of feet. Take sunscreen with you to reapply often during the day, especially after your child swims or exercises. This applies to waterproof and water-resistant products as well. Follow the directions on the package for using a sunscreen product on babies less than 6 months old. All products do not have the same ingredients; if your or your child's skin reacts badly to one product, try another one or call a doctor. Your baby's best defense against sunburn is avoiding the sun or staying in the shade. Keep in mind, sunscreen is not meant to allow kids to spend more time in the sun than they would otherwise. Try combining sunscreen with other options to prevent UV damage.

From the CDC: https://www.cdc.gov/cancer/skin/basic_info/children.htm





Summer Family Fun Day Trips

Here is a list of places to visit for family fun outings:

Outdoor Activities

Silverman's Farm - Easton, CT. www.silvermansfarm.com 203-261-3306

Jones Tree Farm - Shelton, CT. www.jonesfamilyfarm.com 203-929-8425

Glendale Farm - Milford, CT.

Robert Treat Farm - Milford, CT. www.roberttreatfarm.com 203-878-4270

Bishops Orchard - Guilford, CT. www.bishopsoorchards.com 203-453-2338

Mondo Ponds - Milford, CT.

Ansonia Nature Center - Ansonia, CT www.ansonianaturecenter.org 203-736-1053

Fairfield Audubon - Fairfield, CT. www.ctaudubon.org

Beardsley Zoo - Bridgeport, CT. www.beardsleyzoo.org 203-394-6565

Stamford Nature Center - Stamford, CT. www.stamfordmuseum.org 203-322-1646

Eisenhower Park - Milford, CT.

Audubon Costal Center - Milford, CT. www.ctaudubon.org 203-878-7440

Silver Sands State Park & Walnut Beach - Milford, CT.

Indoor Activities and Museums

Everwonder Museum - Newtown, CT. <http://www.everwondermuseum.org> 203-364-4009

Kid City - Middletown, Ct. kidcitymuseum.com (860) 347-0495

Maritime Center - Norwalk, CT. www.maritimeaquarium.org 203-852-0700

Stepping Stones Museum - Norwalk, CT. www.steppingstonesmuseum.org 203-899-0606

New Haven Children's Museum - New Haven, CT. www.childrensbldg.org 203-562-5437

Peabody Museum - New Haven, CT. www.peabody.yale.edu 203-432-5050

Below is a useful website that has more information on enriching outdoor activities.

<http://families.naeyc.org/learning-and-development/development/>



Harborlight Happening 2019
Mystery solved during a delightful,
entertaining evening under the stars
at the Milford Yacht Club, and all
for a good cause - providing
scholarships for the Sue Pavelko
Preschool Scholarship Fund.

Harborlight Happening
committee (from left to right)
Nicole Flanagan, Peggy
Bruno, Pam Lorenzo,
Christine Kennedy, Peggy Kelly,
Sherri Flanagan, Lindsay Darling
Doyle, Ann Doolittle, Lesley
Darling, Anne Marie Lenart, and
Anne Mundy. (not pictured,
Kathy Aspinwall and Judy Lobdell)

Members of the Milford
Juniors Woman's Club,
long term supporters of
Kids Count of Milford
were present and had a
lovely time!



Mystery solved at the Chester Hadlyme Murder
Mystery dinner! The winner took home a shirt and
gift certificate to Stonebridge Restaurant..



The Pavelko and Donegan Family