



Outdoor Play: Problem Solving, Risk-Taking, and the Effects of Technology

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How is outdoor play beneficial for children?

The aim of this study was to focus on how outdoor play is beneficial for children. Through a rapid review process I located literature relevant to the benefits of outdoor play and how technology use impacts outdoor play opportunities. My qualitative research study followed 5 articles, and within those articles data was found to support my study.

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My findings

Through my study I conducted a thematic analysis. Five themes were generated. Connections, influences, interests, job responsibility, and positive development. These themes connect to the key findings within the study.

1. Technology hinders outdoor play opportunities. Relating to negative cognitive, physical, emotional, social, and language development.
2. Outdoor play allows children to develop problem-solving and risk-taking abilities through open play.
3. Outdoor play provides opportunities for children to develop their sense of self, self confidence, and entire self.

Technology Hinders Outdoor Play Opportunities

Technology use such as tablets, tv's and phones hinder outdoor play opportunities. Lack of outdoor play leads to negative effects on all areas of development, leading to impaired cognitive development, low self-esteem, lack of pro-social behaviours, and low academic performance (Alberto et al. 2025).

Parents are the facilitator, teacher, and gatekeeper regarding children's digital technology use (Konca, 2021).



Technology Use

- 97% of homes have one smartphone
 - 75% of families have a tablet in the home
 - 44% of children have their own tablets
- (Konca, 2021)



Outdoor play allows children to be hands-on, and openly explore their environment by taking risks, problem solving, and playing based upon their interests.

Risk-Taking and Problem Solving

Outdoor play is directly linked to risky play which builds children's ability to develop fundamental movement skills, develop perceptual abilities, decision making skills, interdependence, as well as learn to deal with emotions which help determine problem-solving skills (Little, 2017).

Risky Play

- Climbing Trees
- Climbing Rocks
- Riding a Bike
- Using Dangerous Elements



Risky play is a great way for children to learn their own limits, and build confidence in an exiting, thrilling way (Dankiw et al. 2023).

Outdoor Play

Skills like risk-taking and problem-solving abilities have been shown to shine through during outdoor play. Outdoor play provides children with the opportunity to be naturally curious, explore their outdoor environment.

This study found that outdoor play reduces the negative impacts of technology such as obesity diseases, diabetes, and mental health problems (Dankiw et al. 2023; Ebbeck et al. 2019).





It is suggested that for healthy development children should experience 3-4 hours of physical activity per day, with the use of technology it was shown that 37% of children within the United States of America had a low active play level (Mustafaoglu et al. 2018)

Self Development

This study found that outdoor play is linked to increased sense of self, self-confidence, self-esteem, and self-regulation (Ebbeck et al. 2019; Sekula et al. 2024). Outdoor learning shows to provide children the ability to learn about one's self, manage one self, learn and care about others, getting along with others, and evaluating their own impact (Molyneux et al. 2022).

Opportunities Associated with Outdoor play



To be creative, and curious.



Make connections, and
improve communication.



Build relationships and sense
of self.



The Purpose

The purpose of this study was to focus on the benefits of outdoor play, and the impact of technology. This study found that children who spend time outdoors benefit socially, emotionally, physically, and cognitively (Sekula et al. 2024). This study succeed in understanding why outdoor play is beneficial.

Why does this study matter?

This study was conducted from September 2024 to April 2025. This study will be beneficial for families and educators to understand the gravity of technology use and outdoor play opportunities.



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