



Outdoor Play and Learning

Spending time outdoors provides children the opportunity to seek out exercise, explore their environment, develop muscle strength and coordination, and gain self-confidence. That is why it's important to offer children a variety of opportunities to play and learn outdoors. Allowing children the opportunity to play and learn outside of the classroom helps to develop and enhance their creativity, social skills, and independence.

Providers are encouraged to register for [Go NAPSACC](#) and complete the Go NAPSACC's outdoor learning module. This module uses tailored tools and best practices to guide child care providers toward healthy changes for outdoor learning. To view the self-assessment, [click here](#). Below, are additional resources to support implementation.

Encourage outdoor play.

- [Outdoor Classroom Day](#): Outdoor Classroom Day aims to get as many children as possible playing and learning outside. Child care center providers can find outdoor lesson plan ideas, resources to encourage others to get involved, and guidance on making outdoor learning and play part of every day.
- [Plant a Seed and See What Grows](#): Looking for outdoor educational learning resources? Plant a Seed and See What Grows Foundation's website has unwavering support of outdoor education and ways outdoor practices can be embedded into child care programs.

Design play-learning environments.

- [The Outdoor Environment—Designing For Learning](#): Outdoor learning environments offer preschoolers opportunities to explore and learn. This lesson from Virtual Lab School focuses on designing safe outdoor spaces to promote learning, engagement and active play.
- [A Guide to Creating Active Outdoor Play Spaces](#) (from Move More North Carolina): This guide provides examples of active outdoor play spaces and best-practice tips for designing them.
- [Painted Playground](#): Paint your child care center's playground! Playground stencils are an innovative, low-cost way to improve playgrounds. Playground stencils are designed to create painted playgrounds and enhance outdoor physical activity opportunities for children.

Provide portable play equipment.

- [The Role of Portable Play Equipment in Child Care Centers](#) - This helpful fact sheet presents basic information about the role and value of portable play equipment in child care centers as well and information on safely using portable play equipment to encourage physical activity.

Recommendations on the Amount of Outdoor Play:

- All children, birth to 6 years old, should participate in 2 to 3 occasions of active play outdoors, weather permitting
- Infants should be taken outside 2 to 3 times per day, as tolerated.
- Toddlers and preschoolers should be allowed a total of 60 to 90 minutes of outdoor play.