

Physical Benefits

In an outdoor learning environment

Time in nature provides children a wide range of health benefits not least of which are increased physical activity and a reduced risk of obesity. We know from a recent study that time outside can decrease myopia progression which has been on the rise at an alarming rate. Children who spend time outdoors are more likely to be physically active and engage in less sedentary behaviors. Vitamin D levels are supported with more time outdoors. Children who spend time playing and learning outdoors experience increased strength, balance, body awareness and sensory processing skills.

Increased strength and balance

- Moving heavy objects
- Climbing a tree or hill
- Hiking through snow
- Pushing over a rock or tree stump



Sensory Processing

- Feeling different elements outdoors like wind, sun and rain
- Touching a wide range of natural objects such as pine cones, wet mud or cold snow
- Hearing and processing sounds like leaves crunching, birds singing or frogs croaking



Body Awareness

- Noticing where to put your feet as you climb
- Helping others lift large objects and determining where to stand to help each other
- Squatting to observe a small bug without harming it



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The outdoors provides a perfect environment for children to work on fine motor skills that help develop the small muscles in their fingers. Additionally, children who spend time outdoors are able to work on hand eye coordination and safety awareness. As they take risks, children are able to practice making informed judgements. They learn to assess what their body is capable of doing. They are empowered to help determine rules and follow safety protocols.

Fine motor skills

- Picking up small items like acorns
- Harvesting tomatoes
- Collecting seeds from plants
- Using tools that require a firm grasp
- Shucking corn



Hand eye coordination

- Using a hammer to pound in nails
- Gripping and rotating hand drills
- Trying to catch a falling snowflake or leaf



Risk Awareness

- Practicing balance so they can notice their skill and comfort levels
- Determining how high to climb or sled on their own
- Following the safety protocols while using tools

