

Health Trends in Early Childhood

June 2025



Summertime Play - Staying Safe and Cool



Trend

Young children are spending less time outdoors exploring the natural world & engaging in active play.

Educators, health & mental health professionals, and other child advocates agree **this trend has significant adverse effects** on young children's health & development.



Explanation

Reasons why:

Increased use of TV, computer games, DVDs, smartphones & tablets with digital media.
Adult fears about crime and safety.
Child care arrangements with limited free time.
More time spent indoors in structured activities.
Loss of natural habitats.



Impact

Going outdoors:

Improves children's health & well-being.
Strengthens their **hearts, lungs, & muscles**.
Strengthens young children's **immune systems**.
Helps regulate & balance **sleep-wake cycles**.
Milder ADHD symptoms.
Protects against life stressors & helps **develop a general sense of peace & well-being**.



Action

Plan ahead for the heat.

Abundant access to clean, sanitary water, & encourage children to **drink water** during active play.
Schedule outdoor playtimes during cooler hours of the day.
Keep tabs on **outdoor air quality, heat and weather** alert services.
Provide extra protection from the sun.
Wear sun-protective clothing, sunscreen & sunglasses.

Resources

- American Academy of Pediatrics: HealthyChildren: [Extreme Heat: Tips to Keep Kids Safe When Temperatures Soar](#)
- [Supporting Outdoor Play and Exploration for Infants and Toddlers | HeadStart.gov](#)

Learn more at
[**www.pakeys.org/HealthTrends**](http://www.pakeys.org/HealthTrends)

This is the most updated information at release time. The information in Health Trends is not a Pennsylvania regulatory requirement for early childhood providers. Pennsylvania early childhood providers with questions about regulatory requirements should contact their Cert rep or the Bureau of Certification.

