

# 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.

