

# Playgrounds Etc, LLC

Indoor/Outdoor Furniture and Equipment



355 Warrick Drive

Seven Fields, PA 16046

PH: 724-741-0816 Fax: 724-741-0819

E-Mail: [playgrounds@zoominternet.net](mailto:playgrounds@zoominternet.net)

PLAY IS OFTEN TALKED  
ABOUT AS IF IT WERE  
A RELIEF FROM SERIOUS LEARNING.  
BUT FOR CHILDREN PLAY  
IS SERIOUS LEARNING. PLAY IS REALLY  
THE WORK  
OF CHILDHOOD.  
-FRED ROGERS

**THINK OUTSIDE THE**  
**SANDBOX**

Presented By Stuart Sackett

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## THE DIRTY DOZEN CHECKLIST

1. Improper Protective Surfacing
2. Inadequate Use Zone
3. Protrusion & Entanglement Hazards
4. Entrapment in Openings
5. Insufficient Equipment Spacing
6. Trip Hazards
7. Lack of Supervision
8. Age-Inappropriate Activities
9. Lack of Maintenance
10. Pinch, Crush, Shearing, and Sharp Edge Hazards
11. Platforms With No Guardrails
12. Equipment Not Recommended For Public Playgrounds

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## Feeling down or stressed? Try eco-therapy

Psychologists in the field of eco-therapy believe that spending time outdoors is important for our health. Some of the benefits of eco-therapy can be:

- ◆ A reduction in depression
- ◆ A reduction in stress
- ◆ Easing of anxiety
- ◆ Lowers Blood pressure and Blood sugar
- ◆ Improves mood, self-esteem, and motivation
- ◆ Helps control weight
- ◆ Helps Children with sensory processing issues, and sensory overload
- ◆ Reduces symptoms of ADHD
- ◆ Increases the long term ability to cope with stress and adversity
- ◆ Improves cognitive behavioral development and test scores

The information above came from:

<http://www.takingcharge.csh.umn.edu/feeling-down-or-stressed-try-eco-therapy>

<http://www.webmd.com/balance/features/nature-therapy-ecotherapy>

<http://healingforfamilies.com/ecotherapy>

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## **OBJECTIVES OF YOUR OUTDOOR ENVIRONMENT**

- Encourage interaction with respect for nature.
- Provide variety in the curriculum
- Allow space for release of energy
- Challenge children's physical abilities
- Encourage cooperative social play
- Foster autonomy and initiative
- Integrate children with special needs
- Promote language skills
- Foster creativity
- Provide opportunities for children to problem solve
- Encourage multi age play
- Foster adult interaction

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## **NATURE-RELATED MATERIALS**

*Add some of these materials to your outdoor play space to help extend children's appreciation and enjoyment of nature.*

- Bird feeders (can be a wonderful supervised construction project)
- Binoculars
- Compost box (another good supervised project)
- Bird baths
- Wind chimes
- Flags, wind socks, or long ribbons glued to sticks
- Rain gauge
- Watching tub (watch it fill with snow in the winter, rain in the spring, leaves in the fall)
- Magnifying glasses
- Worm gardens (in an old aquarium)
- Dress up clothes ( park ranger, fire fighter, jungle explorer)
- Thermometer
- Water table (explore the temperature changes throughout the day)
- Raised garden beds
- Garden boxes (individual for children to tend their own)
- Trees (tree planting ceremony)
- Outdoor art center (for leaf rubbings, bark tracing and collages)
- Bucket of seashells, sticks, and stones for making designs in the dirt, sand, or grass.

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## PROGRESSION IN CHILDRENS DEVELOPMENT OF PHYSICAL SKILLS

### *1. LOCOMOTOR SKILLS*

- Walking
- Running
- Hopping
- Skipping
- Galloping
- Sliding
- Leaping
- Climbing
- Crawling
- Chasing

### *2. STABILITY*

- Turning
- Twisting
- Bending
- Stopping
- Rolling
- Balancing
- Transferring weight
- Jumping/landing
- Stretching movements
- Curling
- Swinging
- Swaying
- Dodging

### *3. MANIPULATIVE*

- Throwing
- Catching
- Kicking
- Punting
- Dribbling
- Volleying
- Striking with racket
- Striking with long handle instrument

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## **A GOOD PLAY ENVIRONMENT CONSISTS OF NO LESS THAN 17 TYPES OF PLAY AND LEARNING SETTINGS**

1. Entrance-Exit
2. Pathways
3. Signage and displays
4. Fences-Enclosures-Barriers
5. Manufactured equipment
6. Game Area
7. Ground cover and Safety surface
8. Land Forms
9. Trees
10. Gardens
11. Animal habitats
12. Water
13. Dirt/Sand
14. Play props
15. Gathering, meeting, and working places
16. Stage Settings
17. Field house and storage area

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## 7 Reasons Your Children Should Be Outside Right Now

When it comes to play, many children begin settling down in front of the television and game systems at a surprisingly early age. Yet even with the draws of the inside, many children are longing to go outside and do something – anything, to break their boredom. Being outside offers tremendous advantages to children and adults alike. No matter the weather, get your children outside.

### **1. Outside Air is Better Air**

Unless you're under a pollution or contamination risk of some kind, being outside allows your child to breathe better air. The air inside our homes is often recycled; contaminants, dust, and everything else can become trapped in the air making the home a bit of a health risk. Throw open a few windows and take the family outside into the fresh air. You and your children will feel better breathing it and unless you're in an area heavy with free radicals and pollution, you'll likely see an increase in your overall health as well.

### **2. Being Outside Encourages Activity**

Just stepping outside seems to make you feel more active. While there are terrific ways to rest and relax outside, such as hammocks and chaise lounges, most outside activities take much more movement than the inside ones. Being outside can encourage your children to ride bikes, take a walk, play chase, climb on the slide, play in the pool, or dig in the dirt. Simply moving about outside from one area of the garden to another is infinitely better than all the sitting about they do while playing video games or watching television.

### **3. Outside Activities Are Family Friendly**

Playing outside will encourage your children to play together and also gives you a role to play in many cases. Drag out the bikes and head off for a family ride through the neighborhood. Take a walk together to the library or the bookstore to pick up a few things. Send your children running ahead of you as you walk to the mailbox or post office. You'll want to be outside with your children to help keep them safe, which often means that your activity level increases as well.

Being outside without the distractions of games or television also means that you'll be able to talk to your kids and enjoy their true personalities a bit more easily. In the worst hours of the day behavior-wise, skip the trouble after dinner by leaving the dishes in the sink to wash later and head out for a family walk. Letting everyone walk, talk, listen to music or jog ahead will help to finalize the day and give all the members of the family time to process their thoughts on the day or to simply share with each other's. This might be the only time you have to catch up with your spouse before the rush of bath and bedtime begins.



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## 4. Being Outside Encourages Creativity

Playing outside gives children free reign over their environments. They are able to create anything they want. The porch becomes a sea worthy vessel and the grass is a poison that must be avoided at all costs. The dirt becomes food and the garden hose can start a waterfall. Playing outside lets, the mind explore and create any number of things as games are invented and enjoyed by your children.

You'll soon discover that there is no limit to the amount of creativity a child can enjoy when she's not limited to the plot of a show or the characters of a particular game. Creativity extends beyond games and play, as well. Being creative in how she plants flower seeds, or the images she sees in the clouds. Being outside is a great outlet for creativity, but it is also a means of inspiration. Being outside allows your child to see nature at work and gives her countless ways and opportunities to impart that nature into her crafts and ideas in all areas of her life.

## 5. Science Happens Outside

Just being outside gives your child the opportunity to see science in the making. Stepping out after a rain can let your child see a rainbow, pick up earthworms, jump in puddles, and watch the water slowly disappear as puddles evaporate. Growing a garden outside will give children plenty to watch and discover as seeds come out of the ground and eventually produce fruits and vegetables to be enjoyed by the whole family. There are many science experiments that you can enjoy inside, but simply being outside will let your child stumble across learning opportunities in every corner. With you by her side, she might learn more about science in a summer of outside play than she did in a year in the classroom.

## 6. Being Outside Improves Health

In many ways, simply being outside improves health. The waxy, pale demeanor of someone who's always inside is easy to spot. The healthy glow of the outside child is refreshing to see. Being outside allows the body to produce vitamin E from the sun's rays. It also gives the body a chance to move and burn off energy and toxins. Being outside encourages exercise which helps the heart to work more efficiently and the body to be more productive overall. The running and playing that a child enjoys outside helps to make the body stronger as well. Building muscles, helping the heartbeat faster, and letting the muscles and ligaments loosen and stretch is the same as a full workout, and many children are content to play outside for hours should they have the opportunity.

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## 7. Playing Outside Burns Excess Energy

Some children seem blessed with too much energy. Putting a high-energy child inside a house or small flat for hours on hours is not only cruel to the child; it's cruel to you – his caregiver. Children need constant stimulation and they usually get that level of interesting material through friends at school, through crafts and experiments, through videos, music, and other media. The need for constantly changing scenery and new outlets for energy make the backyard the perfect place to play. If you don't have a garden of your own, a quick walk or drive to the park every afternoon will make your home a much better place. Your child will be able to burn off energy and everyone will get a break from being cooped up inside the house without enough to do.