

ExchangeEveryDay

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Why Play Outdoors?

"The average American boy or girl spends as few as 30 minutes in unstructured outdoor play each day. Only 6% of children age nine to 13 play outside on their own in a typical week."; These are frightening statistics shared by Edward Shepard in his article, "[8 science-backed reasons for letting your kids play outdoors.](#)" Here are two of the eight reasons he cites:

1. **Better vision** — Multiple studies show that sunshine and the natural light of outdoors lowers the chance of nearsightedness and improves distance vision in children. Kids who spent more time outside had better distance vision than those who prefer indoor activities. A recent study from Ohio State University College of Optometry says that 14 hours a week of outdoor light is effective for better vision.
2. **Better resistance to disease** — Multiple studies show that playing in the dirt (soil) outdoors helps kids stay healthy. Bacteria, viruses, and other gross things in the soil actually help the immune system and brain develop. Playing in the dirt can also improve a child's mood and reduce anxiety and stress.