

April – Outside play, physical activity and injury prevention

Article for website or newsletter:

Get outside and play

Physical activity is a necessary requirement for optimal health – and the benefits are even greater if you can do it outdoors.

Regular physical activity in childhood helps to develop cardiovascular fitness, muscle strength and bone density, and being outdoors is known to improve mental health.

There are many benefits to unstructured, outside play. When children spend time outside, they:

1. **Sit less, move more and play longer** – key to cardiovascular health and fitness.
2. **Have healthier eyes** – 10+ hours a week outside reduces nearsightedness risks.
3. **Sleep better** – sunlight helps regulate melatonin and sleep patterns.
4. **Enjoy improved mood** – exercise reduces symptoms of anxiety and depression.
5. **Feel more connected to nature** – experience calm and develop mindfulness.

Planning active outings doesn't have to be challenging or costly. Here are some ideas that you can try this week:

- **Go for a walk or hike** – try these [10 hikes to take your kids on this summer](#).
- **Play in a forest or park** – try a new [regional park](#) every day for a week.
- **Climb a tree** – this [Vancouver climbing tree](#) is inspiring, but start smaller!
- **Explore a local stream** – check these [beautiful watershed walks](#) in the region.
- **Play hopscotch or jump rope** – try teaching these [six fun jump rope games](#).
- **Swim at the pool, waterpark or beach** – check [beach safety conditions](#) first.
- **Ride a bike or scooter** – find [easy, family-friendly cycling routes](#).
- **Visit farms, fish hatcheries and bird sanctuaries** – this [local family fun guide](#) has unique ideas.

Find more ideas to keep your kids active through the year on Fraser Health's website: <https://ow.ly/lrmm50PezbK>

Social media posts

Facebook

*Physical activity is a necessary requirement for optimal health in children.
Visit Fraser Health's website to learn about the importance of physical activity*

and how to incorporate it into your child's daily activities:
<https://ow.ly/e3Zq50Pezc4>.

Twitter

Visit Fraser Health's website to find out how much physical activity is recommended for your child as well as tips to support your child to be physically active: <https://ow.ly/VFMv50PezeI>.

Instagram

There are many benefits for children who play outside, like cardiovascular health, better sleep and improved mood. Fraser Health's guide to outdoor play can help you plan outdoor activities even when you're on a tight schedule: <https://ow.ly/x2E850Pezcn>.