

Outdoor free play

Outdoor play is vital for children. It gives them the opportunity to run, jump, climb, balance, explore, get fresh air, exercise, learn about nature, experiment, get creative and use their imagination. I feel this is a recipe for happy healthy children.



There are times when it can be challenging to get children outside. There are often too many enticing things (in their eyes) keeping them indoors, such as the TV, technology, toys, dry and warmth. When times are challenging, I often go outside with my children to play. However, I believe it is also important for children to be allowed outdoor free play, without constant adult supervision. I find my children are more likely to play nicely using their imaginations when they think they are not being observed. Obviously, the garden needs to be safe enough for children to be left in and depending on age checked on at intervals etc.

Outdoor free play gives children a greater chance to explore their environment and learn through experimentation freely. They can get creative with their play, pretend and discover things for themselves, which I believe is the best and most effective way to learn.

As an example, last weekend, my children enjoyed some free play in the garden. First they climbed on the climbing frame calling and chatting to each other, they swung from it, they balanced on it, they tested their own limitations. Next, they swung on the swing, pushing each other (that's a great benefit of having twins, they help each other). After that, they collected some pots and sat down together collecting leaves, mud, worms and goodness knows what else to make concoctions, mixing them up, experimenting with what they could concoct. This naturally progressed to some pretend play of mummy's and daddy's in their playhouse, cooking and feeding the baby their concoction! I have to admit, I absolutely love earwiggling into their pretend play situations, its fascinating hearing the things they come out with and it usually makes me smile! They also had races on their scooters

and kicked a ball about a bit.

This outdoor free play session, was fantastic. They learnt many gross motor skills, they learnt about socialising, communicating, sharing, science, nature, creativity and how to use their own imagination. It is amazing how much learning can take place when you let your children free! Sometimes as parents, the best thing we can do for our children.....is let kids be kids!

