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This is a guest post by Veronica Wallace.

These days, many kids prefer screens to the great outdoors. You might have to take away their electronics to convince them that there's more fun outside the house than online.

A child who spends time outdoors will be happier, stronger, and more confident. There are many benefits of exploring nature with children, especially when you consider the alternative: more screen time.

Playing outside with children enriches their lives. Why do kids need to spend time in nature? It teaches them how to be healthy, creative, and curious.

### 1. Being Outside Benefits Mental Health

Children are experiencing greater levels of anxiety and depression. Spending too much time online can worsen these issues and impact a child's self-esteem; it gives them a warped perception of reality. Instead, infuse their lives with wonder by taking them to a local site that features something natural and unexpected.

Being outside gives children the ultimate freedom – they don't have to necessarily follow the rules and tasks set out for them when they're indoors. Kids become more confident by learning new skills.

If they can hike a trail, roast some marshmallows, or catch a fish, they'll have a cool story to share with their friends. It gives them something to be proud of.

### 2. Adventuring in Nature Increases Knowledge of the Physical World

When your child explores the outdoors, they'll become curious about what they find. From trees to flowers, and even wildlife, your child will be inspired to learn more about the world around them.

Rather than only using their eyes to watch a screen, a child uses all their senses when outdoors; they smell the air, feel the grass, taste the rain, see the sky, and hear the blowing wind.

A child who comes across something they can't explain, like an animal's behaviour or a sprawling tree, will want to seek information about it. They'll place more value on preserving nature when they come to appreciate all that it has to offer.

Seeing life through a screen creates a disconnect between oneself and the natural world. A child who has adventures outdoors will understand the importance of keeping our planet green.

### 3. It Encourages Good Physical Health

Sitting inside on a couch all day is not a healthy way for kids to use their bodies. Running outside, on the other hand, will stretch their legs. Climbing the monkey bars will get their arms moving and their hearts pumping.

Many children spend the majority of their days inside. By venturing outdoors, they'll engage in physical activity and exercise. It's more physical than using their fingers to scroll through games on a tablet.

### 4. Spending Time in Nature Protects Them From the Dangers of the Internet.

A child can accidentally or intentionally access a wide range of harmful material online. If they're more drawn to spending time in nature, they're less likely to seek stimulation on the world wide web.

Being more curious about nature encourages kids to make healthy inquiries about the planet.

### 5. It Reduces Screen Time

Being with our children will help them grow as people. Taking your child outside for a day of fun in the sun will get them off their iPads or computer screens. It gives their eyes a necessary break. A child who spends hours a day in front of a tablet can harm their developing brain.

Playing in nature begins a process of self-discovery. If your child learns that it's even more fun to climb trees than to surf the web, they'll spend less time online, and more time outside.

#### 6. The Great Outdoors Will Stimulate Imaginations

Screens provide all the entertainment a child could ever imagine, and they hardly have to lift a fingertip. If they go outside, they'll have to invent their own fun.

This is an active exercise of their imagination that requires them to put effort into their playtime. They need to think consciously to create games and activities they can do outside. Physical games like tag, hide and seek, or grounders engage the mind and the body.

Virtual apps and videos do all the work for kids – they simply have to press play and watch mindlessly. With the outdoors, they need to design ways to have fun.

#### 7. It Will Help Manage Stress

There's nothing quite like taking a deep breath of fresh air. It clears the mind and relieves it of any immediate stressors. Though we don't always realize it, children experience stress, too. They're growing up in a confusing and radically different era than any other generation.

Taking the time to appreciate nature can remind them of the beauty that life has to offer. Children can have busier schedules than adults at times, between school, art classes, playdates, homework, and swimming lessons – getting outside for some unstructured time gives them a much-needed break.

Simply breathing fresh air can clear the mind and relieve anxiety.

#### 8. Being Outside Builds Resilience

Children encounter unique challenges when they're outdoors: the bathroom won't be two steps away, snacks aren't readily available, and the weather can be too cold or hot. They might get a bump or scrape that causes some discomfort.

Challenges like these will build their strength and prepare them for the adversity that they may encounter in life. It allows them to see past instant gratification and persevere for a greater reward.

A child who spends their whole day inside has all their needs met easily – one that takes the time to explore the outdoors will learn to be prepared for adventure and will learn valuable life lessons about how to face challenges head-on.

Thanks for sharing the importance of nature in child development, Veronica! Here are some fun rain activities to keep kids learning about the outdoors.

#### About the Author:

Veronica Wallace is a childhood educator and blogging enthusiast. Some of her favorite articles can be found on the KIDTHINK website. KIDTHINK specializes in offering mental health services for youth aged twelve and under, along with community outreach and training for this type of treatment.