

# Pointers For Parents

## Outdoor Play: Fun And Fundamental To Healthy Child Development

(NAPSA)—It may be a good idea for parents to work at getting their children to play outdoors. That is because studies show the benefits of active play extend far beyond fun and games.

“Outdoor play is a fun and fundamental part of children’s cognitive, social and physical development,” explains Dr. Rhonda Clements, president of the American Association for the Child’s Right to Play. “Providing frequent active play opportunities is an effective way to help children relieve stress, challenge their leadership skills and increase an appreciation of nature.”

Yet the recent Wisk Active Play Survey found only 31 percent of mothers said their children play outdoors often.

To offer solutions to parents, Dr. Clements recently collaborated with Wisk Laundry Detergent to produce the *Active Play Guide*, a “how-to” for parents who want to encourage their children to play outdoors. The guide offers these tips:

- **Be Wild, Be Free**—Vigorous outdoor play activity can help relieve your child’s stress in a constructive manner. Letting your child get dirty, play free and run wild, while remaining in a supervised area, can serve as a positive release.

- **Variety And Goal-Setting Are Key**—Many outdoor play settings offer opportunities for children to run, jump, climb, skip and use large muscles freely and with vigor—this is important exercise during formative years. Organize a relay race with friends, use chalk to see how high your child can climb, or measure how far groups of children can jump.

### Less Outdoor Playtime?

*Results from the “Wisk Active Play Survey”*

- 85% of moms agreed that children today play outdoors less often than a few years ago.
- 71% of moms said that as a young child, they played more outdoors than indoors, as compared to only 26% of children today.
- The top five reasons moms identified for why children today spend less time playing outdoors:
  - Dependence on television and/or computers: 85%
  - Safety concerns, fear of crime: 82%
  - Parent(s) work and don’t have time to spend outdoors with child: 77%
  - Lack of supervision available: 61%
  - Fear of physical harm to child: 61%



- **Give Kids A Choice**—Allowing your child to choose outdoor activity gives them an increased sense of responsibility and freedom, which can make active play more appealing. It also encourages him or her to expand their imagination.

- **Make It Creative**—There are treasures and lessons to be learned in your backyard. Gather plant life to make creative life collages—a blade of grass, a maple leaf, rose petals, and tiny sticks. Children can learn the names of different flowers and even create an album with their finds.

Visit [www.wisk.com](http://www.wisk.com) for everyday outdoor play tips and information about Wisk’s partnership with KaBOOM!, a national nonprofit organization that builds playgrounds across the United States.