

Nearly half of preschoolers lack one parent-supervised playtime per day

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Parents reported that about half of the preschoolers in a nationally representative sample did not have at least one parent-supervised outdoor playtime per day, according to a report published Online First by *Archives of Pediatrics & Adolescent Medicine*.

The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that clinicians promote active and healthy living, which includes encouraging [children](#) to play outside as much as possible. Young children take part in physical activity by playing and playing outside may be good for motor development, vision, cognition, vitamin D levels and mental health, the authors write in their study background.

Pooja S. Tandon, M.D., M.P.H., and colleagues with the Seattle Children's Research Institute and University of Washington, used nationally representative data from the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study-Birth Cohort to quantify the frequency of parent-supervised [outdoor play](#) by preschoolers based on parents' self-report and to characterize those children most at risk for less frequent parent-supervised outdoor time. Their sample of 8,950 represented approximately 4 million children.

"On average, we found that about half of preschool children in this nationally [representative sample](#) are not being taken outside to play daily by either of their parents. For children who do not have a regular child care arrangement besides their parents (and therefore, likely do not have other structured venues or care providers to take them outside on a

regular basis), 42 percent did not go outside daily," the authors comment.

The study results indicate that 51 percent of children were reported to go outside to walk or play at least once a day with either parent. Also, 58 percent of children who were not in child care went outside daily.

Researchers did not find a significant association of the frequency of outdoor play with the child's television viewing, mother's marital status, household income or parent perceptions of neighborhood safety.

Going outside at least once a day was associated with, among other things, being a boy, having more regular playmates and greater exercise frequency by [parents](#).

Compared with white [mothers](#), Asian mothers had 49 percent lower odds, black mothers 41 percent lower odds and Hispanic mothers 20 percent lower odds of taking their children outside daily.

"Our results highlight the considerable room for improvement in parent-supervised outdoor play opportunities for preschool-aged children, which could have numerous benefits for young children's physical health and development," the authors conclude. "In particular, efforts are needed to increase active outdoor play in children who are girls and nonwhite."

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