

Why taking your kids to the park is always a healthy idea

May 22 2023, by Cara Murez



Need an activity to do with your kids on spring and summer days? Go to

the park.

Outdoor play is good for [physical health](#), mental well-being and reduced stress in children, according to the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP).

"Whether it's sunny or snowing, playing outside is good for children, physically and mentally," said pediatrician [Dr. Monique Jonae Soileau-Burke](#), president of AAP's Maryland chapter.

"Scientific evidence tells us that playing outdoors can improve health, and children love it," she said in an academy news release. "On Kids to Parks Day [May 20], we encourage families to make plans to get their children out into nature for summer fun and well-being. Consider visiting a national, state or local park."

People who spend time in nature have lower levels of stress and depression. It's also fun to be outdoors.

The earlier you share nature with your baby, the more likely they are to develop a lifelong love of the outdoors, AAP notes.

With an infant, you can take a walk through the trees with a stroller. Throw down a blanket to explore weather, [bird songs](#), forest smells and plant textures while giving them some outside tummy time.

Take your kids on a bike ride through the neighborhood or on a bike trail at a local or [national park](#). It's a good activity for all ages if you have a bicycle trailer for [younger children](#).

Once your child is old enough to ride, they also can get exercise outdoors. Take time to explore and enjoy what you see.

Meet friends for a group adventure. This can help build social connections for both kids and adults.

Later, strolls can become hikes and camping trips. Often ranger stations will offer kid-friendly education and maps.

You can get even more exercise by playing sports with your kids. Kick a [soccer ball](#), spike a volleyball, hit a softball or swing a golf club. Or try throwing a Frisbee, tossing a bean bag or jumping rope. You can also swim.

Pack a picnic lunch or plan a barbecue, even if it's in your backyard or on your front porch.

Your next family vacation might include time in one of the nation's many national parks.

It will be more fun if you dress appropriately for the weather. Be sure to pack sunscreen and bug spray, and use [protective equipment](#) for sports, including bike helmets.

More information: The U.S. Forest Services has more on the [wellness benefits](#) of the great outdoors.

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