

# Bigger play areas for kids cut obesity risk

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The global fight against obesity could be helped by providing support for child's play, a researcher from The University of Western Australia has found.

Research leader Dr Karen Martin studied school environments and their association with physical activity during school recess.

The study found children who attended schools with more unobstructed grassed play area per child were more active in recess times. The advantage of exercise during childhood means a reduced risk of obesity as an adult.

"The benefits of childhood physical activity transcend childhood and

adolescence, and include a reduced risk of [being overweight](#) or obese," Dr Martin said.

The study found children were more likely to get out and play if there were plenty of open, grassed areas available to them.

Dr Martin said her study supported earlier research which found the availability of open fields was associated with higher physical activity.

She said expansive and unobstructed grassed surfaces were ideal for children's sports and games.

"The results indicate that the amount of grassed play area available is an important variable to consider during school planning.

It was also noted in the study that schools could boost [physical activity levels](#) in children if they engaged an active [Physical Education](#) coordinator. Not only were children encouraged to exercise more but they had a healthy [role model](#) as well.

Provided by University of Western Australia

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