

Examining correlates of outdoor play in childcare centres ^[1]

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AVAILABILITY

Access abstract online ^[2]

Abstract

Objectives

Childcare centres are an important setting for young children to engage in outdoor play. The objectives for this study were to (1) determine the average outdoor play duration and frequency for toddlers (19–35 months) and preschoolers (36–60 months) in childcare centres, (2) determine if duration and frequency differed across winter (December–March) and non-winter (April–November) months, and (3) determine correlates of outdoor play duration and frequency.

Methods

Childcare centre directors (n = 240) in Alberta, Canada, completed a questionnaire adapted from the Nutrition and Physical Activity Self-Assessment for Child Care (GO NAP SACC) Outdoor Play Tool that measured outdoor play separately for toddlers/preschoolers and winter/non-winter months. Consistent with the tool, centres were categorized as meeting or not meeting best practices for outdoor play duration and frequency. The questionnaire also measured demographic, socio-cultural, environmental, and policy correlates. Chi-squared tests and multiple logistic regression models were conducted.

Results

More centres met the outdoor play duration and frequency best practices in non-winter than in winter months for toddlers (duration: 79.2% vs 24.9%; frequency: 11.4% vs 1.4%) and preschoolers (duration: 55.7% vs 14.6%; frequency: 20.2% vs 3.4%). Correlates of outdoor play duration and frequency varied across age groups and seasons. However, educator certification, educator professional development, and play areas were most consistent across final models.

Conclusions

Findings from this study suggest correlates of outdoor play may differ across age groups and seasons. Interventions aimed at increasing outdoor play in childcare centres appear warranted, especially in winter months for northern locations.

Region: Canada ^[3]

Tags: outdoor ^[4]

Source URL (modified on 30 Sep 2020): <https://childcarecanada.org/documents/research-policy-practice/20/09/examining-correlates-outdoor-play-childcare-centres>

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