

USDA Forest Service

URBAN FOREST CONNECTIONS

webinar series

Second Wednesdays | 1:00 – 2:15 pm ET

www.fs.fed.us/research/urban-webinars



LET THEM CLIMB TREES! THE DECLINE OF PLAY OUTDOORS AND THE RISE OF SENSORY ISSUES



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LET THEM CLIMB TREES!

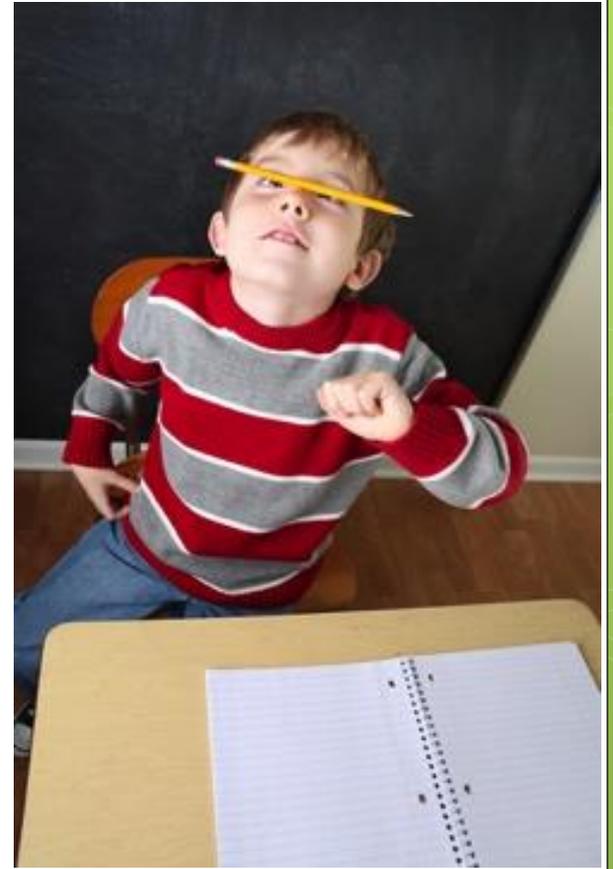
The decline of play outdoors and the rise in sensory issues

By Angela Hanscom, MOT,
OTR/L



Rise of Sensory & Motor Issues

- Decreased attention
- Fidgeting
- Decreased strength
- Poor posture
- Decreased stamina
- Frail
- Falling
- Endless Colds
- Increased aggression
- Trouble reading
- Emotional
- Rise in anxiety
- Children not playing



The Big Divide

- Less prepared than ever before
- Yes we are expecting MORE
- Increased coding
- Increased children getting reading services, etc.

Two Major Changes

- Increase Technology
- Decrease Time Outdoors *
 - Children spend a lot of time at school
 - Advocates for outdoor play
 - Carry-over to home environments



I'm here to tell you....

to do everything in your
power to get kids outdoors!



The Vestibular System

- Feeds into the limbic system – center for emotions
- Turns brain on to pay attention
- Why kids fidget
- We are saying, “don’t spin,” “get down from that tree,” “be careful”
- Kids are becoming more and more unsafe

Right and surprisingly wrong ways to get kids moving

- Bouncy balls, fidgets, and movement discs
- Not enough movement
- Not fully engaging the senses
- Outdoors offers both



The Right Kind of Movement

- Effects of Daily Restrictions on Children
 - Always in an upright position
 - Don't just run (running groups)
 - Spin, go upside down, roll, climb
 - Develop the vestibular system



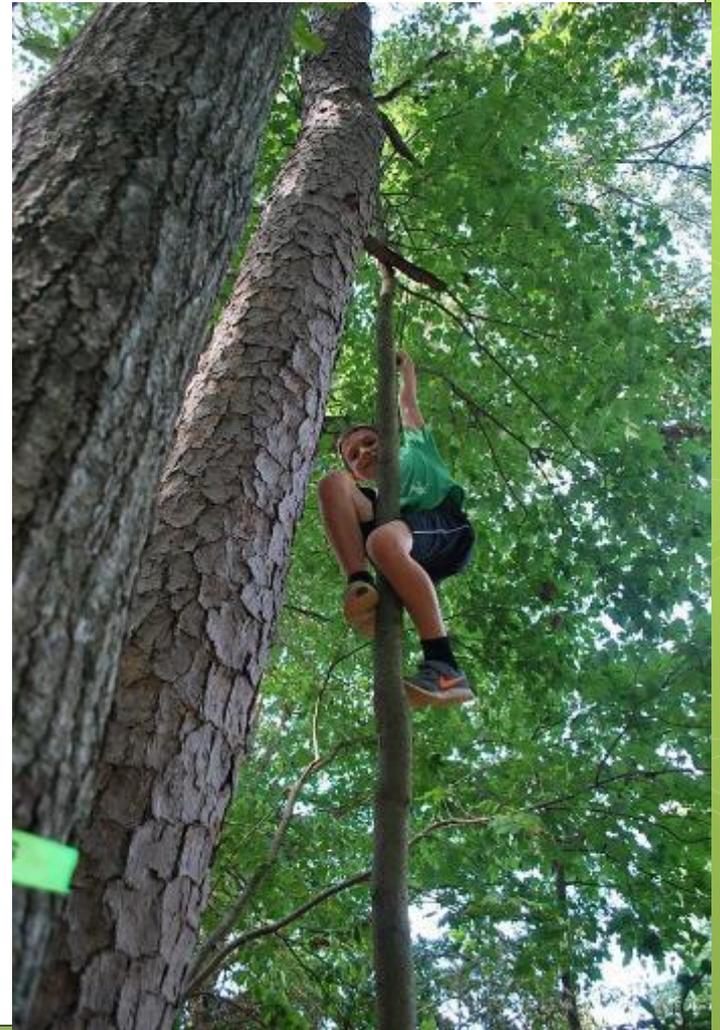
The Proprioceptive System

- Tag
- Kids of the past vs. today



Nature is the Ultimate Sensory Experience

- Engages all the senses
- Man Made vs. Nature





This? or This?



This?



or This?

Nature is Therapeutic

- Fosters Listening
- Improves Visual Skills
- Enhances the Sense of Touch
- Going Barefoot
- Playing in the Dark

Recess

- Remember?



Importance of Free Play



Ways to Enhance the Play Experience

- Adults Step Back
- Extend the time
- Fewer Rules
- Loose Parts
- Free to get dirty



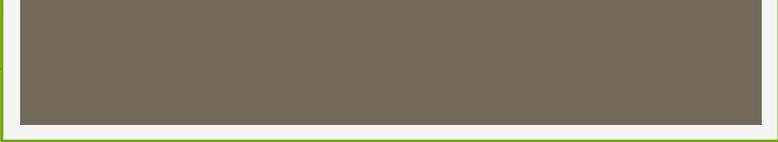


FOREWORD BY RICHARD LOUV
author of the National Bestseller *Last Child In The Woods*

How Unrestricted
Outdoor Play
Makes for Strong,
Confident, and
Capable Children

BALANCED and BAREFOOT

ANGELA J. HANSCOM



Questions?