Today’s piece was prepared by Jena Luginbill, MD, based on a Canadian Broadcasting Company piece, [Lack of outdoor play said to hurt children's development](http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/windsor/lack-of-outdoor-play-said-to-hurt-children-s-development-1.2497526) with a supporting Washington Post article [New AAP statement calls recess ‘cruciak’ to child’s development](https://www.washingtonpost.com/lifestyle/new-aap-statement-calls-recess-crucial-to-childs-development/2013/01/07/ee459f0a-5697-11e2-a613-ec8d394535c6_story.html)

As our world has become increasingly focused on technology and the internet, children have been moving to spend more of their free time indoors, watching tv, playing on the internet, or playing video games. To add to the problem, many schools are beginning to gradually decrease the amount of time children spend at recess/doing free activities in favor of spending more time in math, science or other regimented school subjects. These articles touch on this movement from more outdoor imaginative play to indoor play relying on  screens, involving no movement, and not relying on imagination.

The Washington post article illustrates the AAPs statement in 2013 endorsing recess, and mostly outlines the benefits of recess, to give children a mental break from sitting and trying to concentrate as well assist in preventing obesity through increased activity.

In the CBC news article from Canada, they list the benefits of outdoor play, including increased imagination, improved cognitive, mental and social functioning and decreased problem solving abilities. They discuss how parents are not letting children outside of their homes as they feel it is more unsafe these days. They discuss how a community in Canada has taken it upon themselves to create more “free” outdoor playgrounds to allow children to explore. The paper also discusses how many modern neighborhoods are not equipped to allow for outdoor play. They note that technology is now reaching newborns, with a baby seat incorporating an iPad holding device. This article is heavily partial to the statement that children need more time playing outside to develop their brains. It does not use much scientific facts, and instead uses mostly “expert” opinion, or the opinions of the families quoted in the articles. And while outdoor play appears associated with better developmental outcomes, other associations must also be considered, such as increased screen time. If families would like more information regarding the benefits of outdoor play and ways to help their children enjoy time outdoors, here are some resources.

**RESOURCES ON OUTDOOR PLAY:**

[AAP 2013 Statement](http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/pediatrics/131/1/183.full.pdf) *endorsing recess, along with all the benefits of outdoor exercise*

[Healthy Children](https://www.healthychildren.org/english/safety-prevention/at-play/pages/default.aspx) *AAP guidance for parents on play*

[Outdoor Play on Winter Days](http://extension.psu.edu/youth/betterkidcare/knowledge-areas/environment-curriculum/activities/all-activities/outdoor-play-on-winter-days) *Penn State Extension Youth and Family suggestions on outdoor activities for parents with their children*

And that’s today’s Developmental & Behavioral Pediatrics: IN THE NEWS!