
JUNE HEALTH NOTE: UNSTRUCTURED PLAY

Did you know **unstructured play** and increasing access to the outdoors to explore can greatly benefit your child's learning. Unstructured play is allowing your child free time to play how they want, no instructions, directions, or guidelines needed. It gives children a sense of freedom and control while learning about themselves, what they like and don't like, and even make mistakes without feeling any pressure or failure. Just allow your child to play and have fun!

Benefits of unstructured play include:

- Promotes physical activity - One hour of physical activity every day: at home, at school, at play. Remember every step counts!
- Promotes mental and emotional health and wellbeing
- Improves social skills, imagination, creativity, and teamwork
- Improves learning and attention at school leading to better academic scores
- Develops resilience and risk-management skills.

Try some of the following suggestions:

- Increase outdoor playtime. Be active as a family; take a nature walk, ride bikes, explore a new playground or park.
- Limit time with electronics (TV, tablets, mobile phones, video games, etc.) to less than two hours per day. **Screen time and video games do not count as unstructured play**
- Let your child be bored - resist offering suggestions for how they might entertain themselves. Coming up with an idea for what to do is how unstructured play begins.
- Invite the neighbors and put music on for kids to have a dance party.
- Try some of these play ideas; Chalk art on the driveway or sidewalk, making pillows and blankets available to build a fort, building with cardboard boxes, shoe boxes, or empty egg cartons
- Teach by example. Do you have unstructured play activities of your own? Don't feel guilty about the time you take for yourself to work out, paint, read, garden, or go for a walk. You're teaching your child an important lesson: Play is a priority, no matter how old you are!

Make a commitment to get the whole family out to play.

You will enjoy health benefits, quality time, great memories, and the endless potential for fun and laughs.

[Physical Activity Tips for Children \(5-11 years\) - Canada.ca](https://www.canada.ca/en/healthycanadians/physical-activity-tips-for-children-5-11-years)
[Play Infographics | Canadian Public Health Association \(cpha.ca\)](https://www.cpha.ca/en/infographics)

Healthy Learners in School Program
Anglophone West School District