

FAMILY RESOURCE

C O N N E C T I O N

A publication created by and for New Horizon Child Care • www.newhorizonchildcare.com • Phone: 763-557-1111



At New Horizon Child Care, children go outside to play each day, weather permitting. Families are required to provide appropriate clothing including hats, mittens, warm coats, and boots.

The Benefits of Outdoor Play

The delights of the outdoors are among the deepest, most passionate joys of childhood. The good news about that is that the benefits of playing outdoors reach even beyond the fact that it is just so much fun for children. Early childhood educators recognize the critical value of outdoor play for all young children. Outdoor play provides the opportunity for more and different kinds of play than occur indoors: riding bicycles and tricycles, running and climbing, using of space, interacting with the environment, and experimenting with one's physical abilities. Outdoor play also provides children with the opportunity to be more carefree; it is a time when children can freely move their bodies and express their voices at a higher range than when indoors.

Unstructured physical play is a developmentally appropriate outlet for reducing stress in children's lives, and research shows that physical activity improves children's attentiveness and decreases restlessness. **Other benefits of outdoor play are:**

1. Play is an active form of learning that unites the mind, body, and spirit. Until at least the age of nine, children's learning occurs best when the whole self is involved.
2. Play reduces the tension that often comes with having to achieve or needing to learn. In play, adults need not interfere and children tend to relax.
3. Children express and work out emotional aspects of everyday experiences through unstructured play.
4. Children permitted to play freely with peers develop skills for seeing things through another person's point of view--cooperating, helping, sharing, and solving problems.
5. The development of children's perceptual abilities occurs while playing on the playground. The development of the senses of smell, touch, and taste, and the sense of motion through space are powerful modes of learning that also occur while enjoying the outdoors.

(continued)

Mission

To open "New Horizons" of self-esteem and potential for the little people entrusted to our care, their families, and our employees by providing and continuously improving the best child development on the planet!



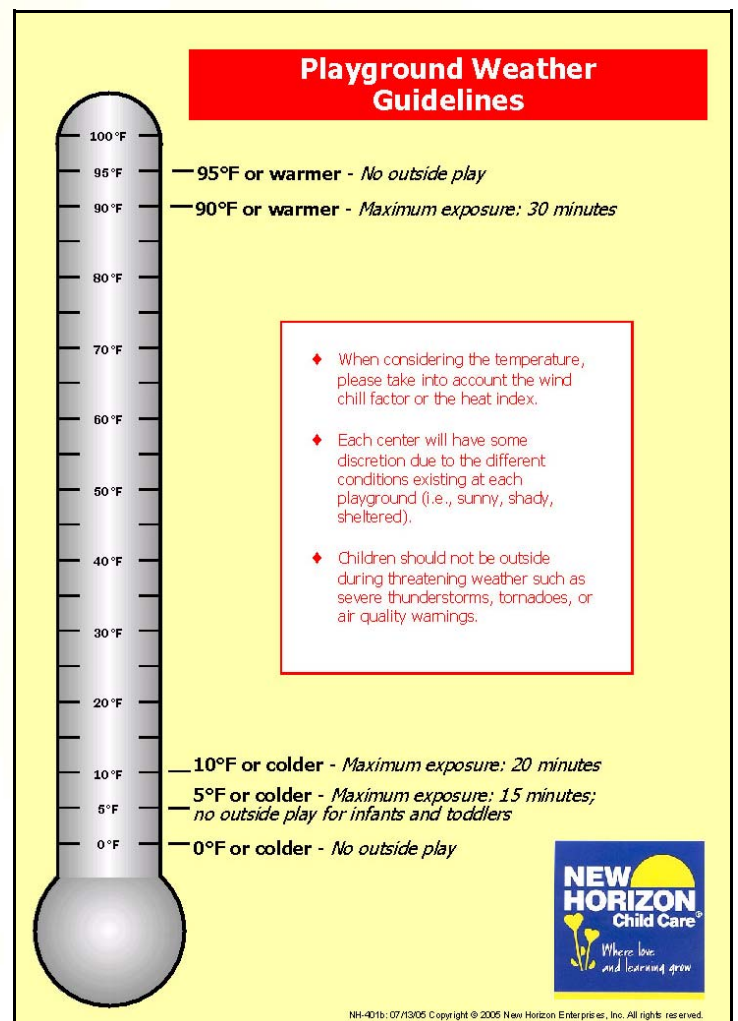
As we approach the time of year when the daylight is limited, outdoor play at New Horizon Child Care becomes even more valuable. Oftentimes, it is already dark when children go home each day, thus limiting outdoor time at home. New Horizon Child Care recognizes this need for children to feel the sun and wind on their cheeks and engage in self-paced play. Children's attempts to navigate the jungle gym, negotiate the hopscotch course, play tag, or toss a football require intricate behaviors of planning, balance, and strength--traits we want to encourage in children. Unstructured outdoor play provides wonderful opportunities to expand their imaginations beyond the constraints of the indoor classroom.

New Horizon Child Care's outdoor play policy is that we take children out on the playground every day, weather permitting. This is required by the Licensing division of the Minnesota Department of Human Services. Children will remain indoors if the wind chill is 0 degrees Fahrenheit or below or if the heat index exceeds 95 degrees. Children attending New Horizon Child Care are expected to be well enough to participate in outdoor activities. Families are also required to provide appropriate clothing for the weather.

New Horizon Child Care stresses the importance of safety on our playgrounds. **Our playground safety rules** include:

1. Ratios are maintained on the playground.
2. Playgrounds are inspected daily for debris that could be dangerous.
3. All staff are required to interact with the children and position themselves in areas of heavy activity such as the climbers and slides. We do not allow chairs on the playground so that the teachers are always up walking around supervising the children.
4. Drinking water and first aid fanny packs are available on the playground.

5. Children are not allowed on the playgrounds while outside maintenance such as lawn mowing, snow blowing and plowing is taking place.
6. Parents must enter the center and check out their child(ren) before removing them from the playground.
7. Items on the playgrounds are picked up each evening.
8. Gates to the playground must remain closed, and fences must be secured.



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