COVID-19 and Encouraging Outdoor Play for Children

Children use play to explore their environment, grow their imagination and discover new opportunities. Playing outside is fun, exciting and important for healthy child development. Below are strategies on encouraging outdoor play for children while helping keep them safe from COVID-19.

When children play outside they:
- think creatively and problem solve
- move more, sit less and play longer
- build muscle strength, coordination and confidence
- learn better, sleep better and feel better physically and emotionally, and
- learn skills that help them cope with stress.

Prevent the spread
- Stay home if you or your child is feeling sick or have been exposed to COVID-19.
- Wash hands with soap and water for 15 seconds when returning indoors.
- Teach children about the proper use of hand sanitizer, and to avoid touching their face.

Practise physical distancing
- Teach children to keep six feet apart from others who do not live with them.
- Do not play in crowded areas.
- Do not have playdates with other families.

Keep safe
- Bring your own toys or sports equipment. Wash toys after play with hot soapy water.
- Avoid touching common surfaces such as park benches.
- Avoid playgrounds.
- Teach children how to stay safe around potential dangers, such as streets.
- Use bike paths and helmets when using tricycles, scooters and bicycles.

Have fun
- Provide time and space for children to play.
- Find park areas with grass, slopes and hills for children to run, crawl, roll and climb on.
- Choose nature trails for children to explore.
- Play with your children and have fun together!

More resources
Outdoor Play Canada
ParticipACTION

More information
For more information on COVID-19, visit our website at toronto.ca/COVID19 or call us at 416-338-7600.