

THIS IS TimberNook

NATURE-BASED, UNRESTRICTED,
CHILD-LED, TRANSFORMATIVE PLAY

VIDEO: [THIS IS TIMBERNOOK](#)

"I look around the woods and see groups of children catching frogs in the marsh, others are working as a team to create a fort using sticks and transparent blankets, and still others are huddled in the corner, captivated by some sort of play scheme."

— Angela Hanscom, *Balanced and Barefoot*

The Problem:

Unrestricted play and exploration are *endangered!*²
Child-led play has been declining for decades due to caregiver fears, increasing academic pressures, and the rise of indoor, sedentary alternatives.^{2,3}
...well so what??

Play is a child's #1 job!² The decline in play has led to an increase in developmental consequences:

- ★ Children are struggling to pay attention and engage in daily tasks.⁴
- ★ Children are more anxious and depressed.²
- ★ Children are struggling to meet educational standards, behaviorally and academically.²
- ★ Children are physically weaker, have less endurance, and have poorer balance and body control.⁴
- ★ Children are struggling to control and express their emotions.⁴



The
Solution?
PLAY, the
TIMBERNOOK
way!

Social & Emotional Benefits:^{4, 5, 10}

Opportunity to collaborate & cooperate; to develop empathy and practice accommodation; to experience conflict and practice self-regulation, self-assertion, & negotiation in the name of conflict resolution.

Physical Benefits:⁴

Opportunity to develop strength, flexibility, stamina, coordination, fine motor skills (small manipulation movements of hands), gross motor skills (whole body movements), proprioception (awareness of the body in space), and calibration of force used in movements.

Psychological Benefits:^{1, 9}

Opportunity to direct their own lives, solve their own problems, develop interests, confidence, adaptability, and self-control.

OUR RECIPE FOR PLAY:

- ☐ Outdoor, natural settings
- ☐ Inspiring materials
- ☐ Space & time
- ☐ Choice & autonomy
- ☐ Natural consequences

Sensory Benefits:¹

Opportunity to awaken their senses and regulate sensory responses with natural sights, sounds, smells, textures, even tastes!
Opportunity for vestibular system development: balance, attention, eye control, postural strength, and spatial awareness.

Cognitive Benefits:^{1, 2, 11, 14}

Enriched outdoor environments and open-ended structure provides opportunity for improved memory, learning, & attention; practice in decision-making, problem solving, & creative thinking; and development of executive functions (planning, organizing, sequencing, initiating and terminating tasks).
Opportunity to practice and interact with math, language, science, and art concepts in a real, meaningful context improving ability to retain and functionally use this information!

STILL CURIOUS? Check out the resources on the following page!

WANT TO DO YOUR PART? Ask your local TimberNook provider for the Tips and Tricks tool to create your own rich play experiences at home!

READ, WATCH, LEARN, SHARE!

Watch These!

1. TEDx Talk - The Real Reason Children Fidget, and What We Can Do About It - Angela Hanscom: <https://youtu.be/PXLaoDucF0k>
2. TEDx Talk - The Decline of Play - Peter Gray: <https://youtu.be/Bg-GEzM7iTk>
3. TimberNook - a Nature-Based Developmental Program: <https://youtu.be/ov1PsSfcAgc>

Read These! - Books

4. *Barefoot and Balanced: How Unrestricted Outdoor Play Makes for Strong, Confident, and Capable Children* by Angela Hanscom: <https://www.amazon.com/Balanced-Barefoot-Unrestricted-Confident-Children/dp/1626253730>
5. *It's Ok Not to Share and Other Renegade Rules for Raising Competent and Compassionate Kids* by Heather Shumaker: <https://www.amazon.com/Share-Renegade-Raising-Competent-Compassionate/dp/1585429368>
6. *Free to Learn: Why Unleashing the Instinct to Play Will Make Our Children Happier, More Self-Reliant, and Better Students for Life* by Peter Gray: <https://www.amazon.com/Free-Learn-Unleashing-Instinct-Self-Reliant/dp/0465025994>

Read These! - Articles & Webpages

7. "Is Play on the Endangered List?" - Brandel France de Bravo: <https://www.center4research.org/play-endangered-list/>
8. "It's A Kid's Job: Playing Helps Kids Learn and Grow" - National Institutes of Health: <https://newsinhealth.nih.gov/2012/06/its-kids-job>
9. "The Decline of Play and Rise in Children's Mental Disorders" - Peter Gray: <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/freedom-learn/201001/the-decline-play-and-rise-in-childrens-mental-disorders>
10. "Playing Around - The Art of Freeplay" - Sol Marie Doran: <https://www.wildernessawareness.org/articles/playing-around/>
11. "Resurrecting Free Play in Young Children: Looking Beyond Fitness and Fatness to Attention, Affiliation, and Affect" - Hillary Burdette & Robert Whitaker: <https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jamapediatrics/article-abstract/485902>
12. TimberNook's Research Page: <https://www.timbernook.com/our-approach-outdoor-experiential-learning-play/our-timbernook-emotional-social-physical-growth/>
13. TimberNook's Balanced and Barefoot Blog: <https://www.timbernook.com/blog/>
14. "Outdoor Play Boosts Children's Performance in Class, Says New Study" - Monica Arkin: <https://www.childinthecity.org/2017/10/10/outdoor-play-boosts-childrens-performance-in-class-says-new-study/?gclid=accept>
15. "How Play Leads to Academic Success at TCS" - Allen Broyles: <https://www.tcsatl.org/blog/how-play-leads-to-academic-success-at-tcs/>