

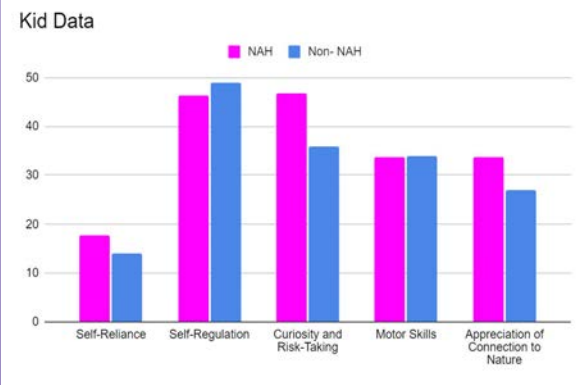
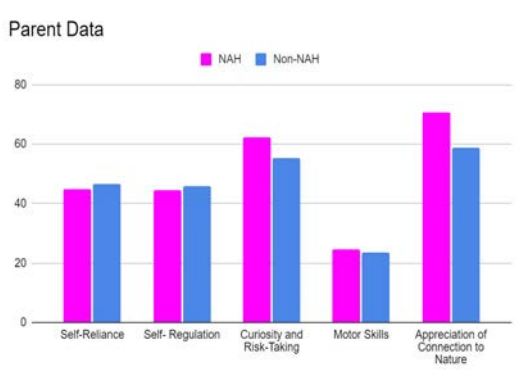
The Effects of Outdoor Education Classes on 5-to-8- year-old Children

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Previous Research

- Analyzed media use in children and found that the effects on other activities are consistently negative (Hofferth 2008).
- Utilized online parental intervention and activities for their children that promote cognitive function and social skills to decrease screen-time usage and increase active play (Hinkley et al., 2017).
- Examined the positive impacts digital technologies can have on children's outdoor play (McGlynn-Stewart et al., 2020).
- Explored how play might differ x localities and seasons (Ergler et al., 2013).
- Assessed the frequency and type of play in preschool children in outdoor settings along with relationships between the types of pretend play and children's social skills (Li et al., 2014).
- Highlighted the benefits of outdoor play overall for children in areas such as attention, cognitive development and creativity, social behavior and emotional well-being, and the eco-psychological self (Kemple 2016).

How Does Outdoor Education Impact Young Children?



METHODS:

- Observed 5 children 5-8 years old from Feb to March, 2023 in a series of 5 outdoor education classes
- Individual interviews of each child after the 5th class (50 questions)
- 79-question parent survey
- Comparison sample: 11 5-11-year-olds that had not taken any outdoor education classes
 - 46-question interview (same questions except about the nature class)
 - 69-question parent survey (same questions minus ones about the class)

OBSERVATIONS:

- Weren't bothered by weather
- Played with and collected natural materials
- Showed a lot of curiosity/ risk-taking behavior:
 - Hung from fallen trees
 - Balanced across river rocks
 - Ate/ walked on/ threw ice
 - Bear crawled on a high tree
 - Played in the stream
 - Hid inside empty tree hole
 - Ran down steep rocky paths

CONCLUSIONS:

- Children who took Nature at Heart classes showed more **curiosity/ risk-taking, more appreciation/ connection to nature, and more self-reliance** than children who did not

References

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Questions for Current Study

- Do children who attend outdoor education classes differ from children who do not in **self-reliance, self-regulation, curiosity/risk-taking, motor skills, and/or appreciation of/ connection to the natural world?**
- Do observations of children, interviews with children, and surveys of parent align with regard to these categories?



Scan the QR code for access to this poster and more information about this study!

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