



CURRICULUM CORNER

By: Cindi Dixon

Wonders Program Assistant at Edgemoor

Take It Outside!

Studies have shown that spending time outside with nature (even urban nature) reduces a child's risk for mental health problems (including ADHD), and contributes to positive outcomes in sensory processing, executive function, critical thinking skills, and physical development. Fresh air is good for you, being wet and cold does not contribute to illness, in fact, it helps the immune system. A little dirt is good for you: A study in Finland showed that urban children exposed to a grassy area every day had big improvements in their gut health in just weeks.

Summer is a great time to think outside the box, or take the box outside! Our teachers will spend more time outside on the playground or having water play, but there is so much more learning that can happen. Teachers can bring easels outdoors for nature masterpieces or lay out tarps in the grass for a picnic snack. A class might have a "mud day" when they paint with mud, explore with it in the sensory table, and even feel it on their feet!

If you'd like to learn more about the cognitive, social-emotional, and physical benefits of outdoor play you can read *Balanced & Barefoot* by Angela Hanscom or *There's No Such Thing As Bad Weather* by Linda Akeson. So, try getting outside to get some fresh air, roll in the grass, jump in a puddle, soak up the sunshine and immerse yourself and your kids in nature!