

Outdoor Play and Learning Module

Outline & Manual

Contents

Module Description.....	2
Learning Objectives.....	3
Training Agenda and Action Icons.....	4
Glossary.....	5
Training Manual.....	6
Video Scripts.....	35
Additional Resources Links	39



Module Description

Physical activity in early child is critical for both physical and mental development. An important context for physical activity is within the early childhood education (ECE) setting, as nation-wide around 80% of young children attend these settings. Outdoor play provides an opportunity for physical activity, but also facilitating academic lessons, and improving child mental health. However, recent reports among Louisiana ECE centers suggest early learning centers only meet 39% of best practices for outdoor play, including policy, environment, playtime, and professional education metrics. The purpose of this training module is to provide evidence-based best practices to child care director and child care staff to foster outdoor play and early child development.

Materials

- Trainees
 - Pre-assessment
 - Review and Reflect
 - Post-assessment
 - 3-2-1 Action Plan
- Trainer
 - Post-assessment Answer Key
- Supplementary
 - Let's Go Outside Handout
 - Let's Get Active Handout
 - Outdoor Play Policy Handout

Learning Objectives

Trainees who actively participate in this session will be able to...

Outdoor Playtime

- Describe the amount of outdoor playtime required for each age group.
- Identify at least one consideration for being outdoors in each hot, cold, and rainy weather.

Outdoor Play Environment

- List at least two of the four requirements for outdoor play environment design.
- Name three types of gardens that can be created within the childcare setting.
- Identify the five types of activities that can be performed in the outdoor play environment.
- Classify portable play equipment and required use during outdoor playtime.

Education and Professional Development

- Stipulate how many times per year teachers and staff should receive professional development on outdoor play and learning.
- Name at least three topics that should be included in professional development on outdoor play and learning.
- Describe how many times per year families should receive education on outdoor play and learning.

Policy

- Identify at least four components that should be included in an outdoor play and learning policy for a program.
- State the physical activity licensing requirement for the state of Louisiana.

Training Agenda

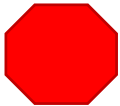



Total Content Time: 1.5 hours

Total Session Time: 2.5 hours

Item	Time/Duration
Registration/Sign-In	30 minutes prior to course start (not included in total course time)
Pre-assessment	5 minutes
Outdoor Playtime	15 minutes
Outdoor Play Environment	35 minutes
Education and Professional Development	15 minutes
Policy	15 minutes
Overview	5 minutes
Post-assessment	10 minutes (not included in total course time)
3-2-1 Action Plan	10 minutes (not included in total course time)
Individualized Q&A	10 minutes following course completion (not included in total course time)

Action Icons

Note: Icons appear under/after the slide they are referring to.

Icon	Action
	This icon means STOP. These are points in the training where it is important to take a moment to assess understanding of the group and answer questions.
	This icon reflects documents. This icon will appear when a specific document is being used, and it will describe which document is needed. Unlike others, these icons usually occur before the slide they are referencing.
	This icon means instruction. This icon will describe instructions or questions to ask the group to facilitate discussion. Quotations are used if the exact words should be used.
	This icon means play. On these slides, you will be asked to play the video on the slide. Please check that the sound up before playing the video.
<i>Script</i>	These italicized lines are the script for the voiceover of that slide. You do not need to read these lines.

Glossary

Best Practice: most effective actions to support child health and development. These practices are usually a higher standard compared to licensing standards.

Childcare Setting: A formalized setting that provides care to young children.

Parent Education: Informational documents given to parents (via email, in-person, or in documents) on child health and development, to help promote healthy practices at home.

Fixed play equipment: Play equipment that promotes physical activity but that cannot be moved from its current location by a child, e.g. jungle gym.

Licensing/regulations/standard: Standards required by the state of Louisiana to maintain licensure. These standards are the minimum guidelines.

Naturalized: An outdoor space that focuses on promoting engaging and exploration in nature through nature-based options rather than manufactured options.

Outdoor Time: Time spent outdoors while at the childcare setting.

Outdoor Environment: The area, activities, and equipment that children use while outdoors.

Policy: plan and standards that embrace the general goals and acceptable procedures within the setting.

Portable play equipment: Moveable equipment that encourages physical activity.

Professional Development: continued training and education of an individual in regards to his or her career.

Training Manual



Skip the “Table of Content” slide and begin with this title slide.

Distribute the Pre-Assessment Evaluation as participants enter the training.



Document used: Pre-assessment

Remember to:

- Ask them to have the Pre-Assessment ready and that the group will walk through this sheet
- Briefly review the forms available to identify the group’s needs
- Modify the session to spend more time on knowledge, skills, and abilities needed by the group



Instructions: Give the following prompt: “Please follow along with these slides on their pre-assessment. It is okay to not know the answer, as we will address each of questions during the training session.”

For each question, you should read the question and ask trainees to answer on their sheet. Answer any questions on terms from the glossary.

Pre-assessment

For each of the following questions, choose the answer that best applies to your **current practices**. Then, indicate that same answer on your sheet.

[Click Here to Begin Assessment](#)

Pre-Assessment Slides

Please note you can advance the slides by 1) clicking through the slides, or 2) click answers within the slides, and the slide will change. you can click “next question” to advance.

Pre-assessment Question 1:

On average, how much **time** does your class spend **outdoors/day**?

- 0 or none
- 1-30 minutes
- 31-60 minutes
- 61-90 minutes
- 90+ minutes

[Next Question](#)

Pre-assessment Question 2:

On average, how many **times per day** does your class go **outdoors**?

- 0 or none
- 1 time/day
- 2 times/day
- 3 or more times/day

[Next Question](#)

Pre-assessment Question 3:

How many **types of portable toys** are available for children, and when are they available?

Portable toys include toys children can carry, throw, push, ride, or twirl, e.g., ride on toys or tumbling equipment

- None
- Few: 1-2 types are available, children take turns
- Some: 3-4 types are available, children take turns
- Many: 5+ types are available, 1 toy per child

[Next Question](#)

Pre-assessment Question 4:

Is there a **garden** for children to grow **herbs, vegetables, or fruits**?

YES
 NO

Pre-assessment Question 5:

If there is a **garden**, how do you **link garden activities** into child's **play and learning**?

Open Response on the pre-assessment worksheet

[Next Question](#)

Pre-assessment Question 6:

How many **times per year** do you complete **professional development** for teachers on **outdoor play**?

- None
- 1/year
- 2/year
- 3 or more/year

[Next Question](#)

Pre-assessment Question 7:

If one or more per year, what type of information is provided in these trainings?
(Click all that apply)

Recommended amount of outdoor playtime for children	Using the outdoors to encourage children's physical active play
Communicating with families the benefits of outdoor play and learning	Our program's policy on outdoor play and learning
The importance of gardening for healthy eating	None of the above/Other

Next Question

Pre-assessment Question 8:

How many times per year do you give parents resources on outdoor activity?

None	1/year
2/year	3 or more/year

Next Question

Pre-assessment Question 9:

If one or more per year, what type of information is provided in these resources?
(Click all that apply)

Recommended amount of outdoor playtime for children	Using the outdoors to encourage children's physically active play
The importance of gardening for healthy eating	Our program's policy on outdoor play and learning
I don't know	None of the above

Next Question

Pre-assessment Question 10:

Final question of the pre-assessment:
Does your program have a written policy on outdoor play and learning?

YES NO NOT SURE

Complete Assessment

Pre-Assessment Question 11:

Which of the following topics are included in your written policy on outdoor play and learning?

- Amount of outdoor playtime provided each day
- Ensuring adequate outdoor play time on inclement weather days
- Shoes and clothes that allow children and teachers to play outdoors in all seasons
- Safe sun exposure and protection for children, teachers, and staff
- Not taking away outdoor playtime to manage challenging behaviors
- Professional development on outdoor play and learning, and gardening
- Education for families on outdoor play and learning, and gardening for healthy eating
- None of the above/I'm not sure

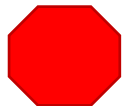
Complete Assessment

End of Pre-assessment

Pre-assessment Complete

Now, take some time to ensure you have marked your answers on your sheet.

Note: if participants choose yes for Pre-assessment Question 10, then Question 11 will appear and be the final question.



STOP: Before moving into the content, answer any questions on the pre-assessment.

Once all questions are answered you can continue to the content.

Outdoor Play and Learning Section



Script: Let's begin with the importance of outdoor play and learning.

Outdoor Play

- Important for child physical, mental, and social development
 - Active Play
 - Explore nature
 - Work with others
- Helps other behaviors
 - Sleep
 - Attention problems

Script: Performing activities outdoors, or outdoor play, is important for early child development. Outdoor play promotes active play, their natural curiosity, and working and being with others. Spending time outdoors can also help children with their internal clock and sleep problems. Children who spend more time outdoors also have fewer attention problems.

Why is Outdoor Play So Important in Child Care?

- Around 80% of 3-5 year olds attend a formal care based setting
 - around 6 hours/day.
- Childcare is an important place for development
 - Mental
 - Physical
 - Social-emotional
 - Interaction with others their own age

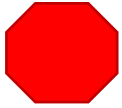
Corcoran L., Stebbins K., Grady S. Early Childhood Program Participation. Results from the National Household Education Survey Program of 2010. NCEE 20170101. Washington, DC: US Department of Education, 2017

Script: So why is it so important in child care? Child care settings serve children are at an important developmental stage, before the age of five years. Children also spend most of their waking hours at childcare, leaving little time in the evening to explore the outdoors. The outdoor play environment can be used to do lessons and promote social interaction with children their own age.

Licensing Regulations vs. Best Practices

 Licensing (Standards) Minimum guidelines to receive funding or remain open General consensus among rule makers	 Best Practices Most effective actions to producing the best results Reflects current evidence Produce better outcomes than minimum standards
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Script: While licensing standards are the minimum guidelines that childcare settings must meet to receive funding or remain open, best practices produce the best results in promoting child wellness and health. While all childcare settings must meet licensing requirements, settings that reach best practices raise the bar and create the best environment for the children. Today, we will be talking about best practices and the ways you can make your setting stand out among others.



STOP: Please take a moment to answer questions on the difference between licensing and standards. This curriculum will focus on best practices.

Purpose of Module

- Build** • Build knowledge around outdoor play and learning
- Give** • Give resources for outdoor play and learning
- Help** • Help with current outdoor play and learning practices

***Script:** Taken together, the purpose of this curriculum is three parts. First, we will build upon your existing background in outdoor play, give resources to meet best practices, and help you make these changes within your outdoor play and learning environment. This training is based on the GoNaPSACC best practices for outdoor play and learning. Let's begin!*

Outdoor Playtime

***Script:** Let's get started with outdoor playtime!*

Outdoor Time

- **Learning Objective A:** Describe the amount of outdoor playtime required for each age.
- **Learning Objective B:** Identify at least one consideration for being outdoors in each of the following weather conditions – hot, cold, and rainy.

Reminder: outdoor time is **not** the same as time at the childcare center!

***Script:** As a part of the lesson today, we will focus on two learning objectives. These learning objectives focus on the amount of outdoor playtime (as in the amount of sessions and for how long), and being able to get outdoors in different environments. Quick reminder that we are talking about time spent outdoors, or outdoor time, not just time at the childcare setting!*

Outdoor Playtime

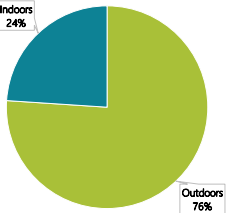
- Children need **at least 3 hours of physical activity per day**
- Additional time outdoors helps children be active
- Scheduling time to be outdoors helps ensure they are **active everyday**

***Script:** Children, toddlers to preschoolers, need at least three hours of physical activity per day! Being active early in life is related to motor and brain development. Children may be busy indoors but it is important for them to get active play throughout the day as well. Being outdoors helps children be active, and scheduling this time ensures they get it everyday for the most benefit.*

Research Spotlight

Percent of Total Active Play Indoors vs. Outdoors

- A study compared the schedules and practices of 108 children (ages 3-5) across 4 childcare centers
- Children who spent more time outdoors spent a greater percentage of that time in active play (play that is moderate to vigorous intensity, similar to exercise.)
- Increasing the amount of time spent outdoors may lead to more active child play.
- So what?** More child active play is associated with better health, more time outdoor may help children be active.



Rautava, A et al. Accelerometer measured level of physical activity indoors and outdoors during preschool time in Sweden and the United States. *Journal of physical activity and health*. 2010; 6, 9.

Script: Recent research has shown that outdoor playtime is related to more child active play, or moderate-to-vigorous physical activity. In this study, they looked at the amount of time children spent outdoors and found that a lot of children's active play happens outdoors. This study shows that time outdoors may help children be active.

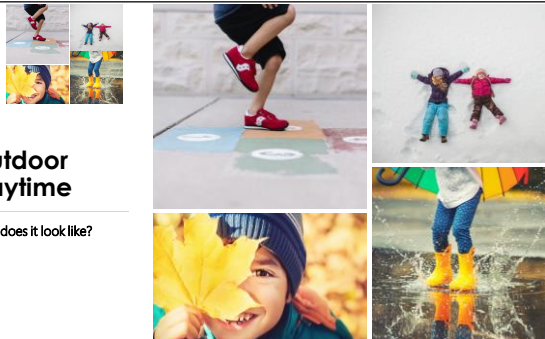
Outdoor Playtime Best Practices by Age

Age	Frequency	Total time
Infants (<1 y)	2 or more times/day	No standard
Toddlers (1-2y)	3 or more times/day	60 minutes or more
Preschoolers (3-4y)	3 or more times/day	90 minutes or more

Script: There are specific best practices for each age, even infants! In general, children should go outdoors at least two times a day.

Outdoor Playtime

What does it look like?




Script: Even if children are going outdoors twice a day, every outdoor playtime session looks different! From the temperature, weather, time of day, and time of year! No session is the same!

Group Question: Ask the group to describe their last outdoor play session. Choose one to three volunteers.

Outdoor playtime can be educational

- Preparing to go outside is an opportunity to practice daily life skills
 - Following a routine, dressing oneself lining up in a single file line, when returning indoors-learning to wash hands
- Use outdoor setting and natural surroundings for lessons
 - Incorporate lessons into outdoors or use extra space to do different lessons
- Unstructured time for child physical activity and free play



Script: Outdoor playtime doesn't have to take time away from lessons! Even from the first step of getting ready to go outdoors, children can be learning. Following a routine, such as dressing oneself, lining up single file, and other self-care habits can be learned from preparing to go outdoors. The outdoor setting can also be a good area to incorporate your lesson plans, especially those activities that may need extra space. Though structure isn't always needed, children can also engage in free play outdoors.

Outdoor playtime is for all ages

Outdoor playtime can help infants discover nature and practice skills

Environment: soft ground and shaded

- Soft surfaces, such as a blanket or soft mat
- A shaded area for them to play





Toys: items that infants can handle

- Instruments
- Mirror balls/ mirrors
- Painting
- Windmills
- Pull up and stand
- Push toys



***Script:** All ages can benefit from being outdoors, especially infants. Outdoor playtime can help infants with their sleep schedule but can also be used to help them discover nature and practice early motor development. When taking infants outdoors, there are two main considerations- the environment and toys. Since infants may not be moving too fast just yet, the environment where they are seated or placed should soft and possibly in a shaded area. Toys or a bag of tricks can help promote infant development and improve their experience outdoors. Toys that they can manipulate or help with standing and walking can help meet developmental standards and best practices for outdoor playtime.*

All Weather

 Dirt	Playing in the dirt can help with a child's immune system
 Hot Weather	Seek shade Water activities
 Cold	Nature hike Decorate an outdoor tree
 Rain	Play in the rain Mud pies

***Script:** You guessed it, children can even be outdoors in all weather. Children get many benefits from playing in the dirt, especially for their immune system. Dirt and natural sources can be a great way for children to dig and practice fine motor skills too. Children can also engage in water-related activity in which there is no standing water, including but not limited to fountains, sprinklers, water slip-and-slides and water tables*

Active in All Seasons - Video



Video (3:02)



Play Video (3:02) on slide.

Ms. Yonetta's Dilemma

- Ms. Yonetta is a new infant teacher at the Friends and Family Early Learning Center.
- Ms. Yonetta is told by her director that she needs to incorporate in outdoor playtime best practices into her classroom, along with meeting the other standards for infant learning and development.
- Ms. Yonetta didn't take infants outside at her other center.
- She is thinking of ideas to get the infants outdoors but is unsure where to start.



Script: Let's met Ms. Yonetta. Ms. Yonetta is a new infant teacher at the Friends and Family Early Learning Center. She is told that she needs to incorporate outdoor playtime best practices into the classroom, but still meet standards for infant learning and development. Ms. Yonetta doesn't know where to start since she did not take infants outdoors at her previous childcare employer. Even with her background in infant care, she is unsure where to start.



Document used: Review and Reflect sheet

Review and Reflect

Review: Let's take a moment to review Ms. Yonetta's Dilemma and apply what was discussed in the module.

1. What is the best practice for the number of times infants should go outdoors each day?
2. What is the best practice for how long infants should go outdoors each day?
3. What are the two parts of outdoor playtime that Ms. Yonetta should consider?
4. Name three items that could help support her efforts to get the infants outdoors.

Reflect: Take a moment to review your current outdoor playtime practices from the pre-assessment

5. Looking at pre-assessment question 1 and 2, what are your current practices?
6. How do your current practices compare to the best practices?

Remember to mark responses on your review and reflect sheet.

[Click to continue to answers](#)

Script: Let's review Ms. Yonetta's Dilemma and apply what we learned in this module to her current situation. Please answer these questions on your review and reflect sheet.



Instructions: Ask trainees to complete answers to these questions on their Review and Reflect sheet. Give trainees up to 5 minutes to complete these questions.

Answers to Ms. Yonetta's Dilemma

What is the best practice for the number of times infants should go outdoors each day?

- Infants should go outdoors 2 times/day

What is the best practice for how long infants should go outdoors each day?

- There is no limit for how long infants should go outdoors

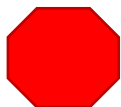
What are the two parts of outdoor playtime that Ms. Yonetta should consider?

- Environment and Toys provided

Name three items could help support her efforts to get the infants outdoors.

- Any combination of these listed answers:
- Environment: Blanket, soft mat
- Toys: items infants can explore, including instruments, mirrors, windmills, push and pull toys
- Other considerations: Wagon or stroller

Script: How'd you do? The answers to the questions are provided. Answers to questions 5 and 6 will depend on your pre-assessment responses.



STOP: Please take a moment to answer questions on the difference between participant's answers and the ones provided.



Module Overview

- Outdoor playtime is important for child mental, physical, and social development
- There are **age specific recommendations** for outdoor playtime
 - **Infants:** 2 times or more/day, for any amount of time
 - **Toddlers:** 3 or more times/day for 60+ minutes total
 - **Preschoolers:** 3 or more times/day for 90+ minutes total
- Outdoor playtime can be educational time for all ages
- Different weather conditions can be used to inspire creativity and play

Script: Outdoor playtime is important for many parts of a child's development, including mental, physical and social development. Though all children benefit from outdoor playtime, there are different standards by age. Most children should be outdoors at least twice a day. Opportunities for outdoor playtime to be educational, for all ages, and done in all weather was discussed in this module.

Outdoor Play Environment Section



Outdoor Play Environment

Script: Now, let's talk about the environment where outdoor play occurs – the outdoors!

Outdoor Play Environment

- **Learning Objective A:** List at least two of the four best practices for outdoor environment design.
- **Learning Objective B:** Name three types of gardens that can be created within the childcare setting.
- **Learning Objective C:** Identify the five types of activities that can be performed in the outdoor environment.
- **Learning Objective D:** Classify portable play equipment and required use during outdoor time.

Script: As a part of this module, we are going to focus on four parts of the outdoor environment. We will talk about parts of environmental design, gardens, activities in the outdoor environment, and types of portable play equipment. All parts of the environment are important for child's outdoor play experience.

Outdoor Play Environment Best Practices

Item	Best Practice
Design	
Structures or trees provide	1/2 -3/4 of shade to the outdoor play area
An open area for outdoor games, activities, and event:	Large enough for all children to run around safely
Play Areas	
Path for wheeled toys	Outdoor play space for preschoolers has 8 or more play areas 5 feet or wider, curved and/or looped, connects to the building and different play areas
Garden	Can grow herbs, fruits and/or vegetables to provide a snack during at least 1 season
Activities performed outdoors	1) Free Play; 2) Structured learning opportunities; 3) Seasonal outdoor activities; 4) Walking trips, 5) Outdoor field trips
Portable play equipment is available and in good condition	Large variety of equipment that can be used for children to carry, throw, push, ride, etc. Always available and Not time restricted

Script: Let's begin with the best practices. Here are the best practices for each of our learning objectives. We will visit each component as part of this module.



Script: The outdoor play environment is very important for children to be active and engage with nature. Though these photos show a big difference, one with few items to play with and one with many play areas and equipment, it's not always clear when considering your own outdoor play environment. Take a minute to reflect, does your outdoor play environment look more like the field or the more natural looking play environment? What are some similarities and differences you see?



Group Question: Ask participants how they would describe their outdoor environment. Which picture does it resemble? Choose one to three volunteers.

Behavior Mapping

- How does changing a child's outdoor environment impact their interaction with the environment and each other?
- In the presence of more natural elements (gardens, trees, diverse settings, etc.) children have greater physical activity
- As children move from station to station, they interact with more of their environment and peers
- So what? Outdoor facilities with more naturalized elements promote greater activity, social/environmental interaction among children.

Map of child movement **before** outdoor upgrades

Map of child movement **after** outdoor upgrades

Herrington, S. et al. Beyond Physical Activity: The Importance of Play and Nature-Based Play Spaces for Children's Health and Development. Current obesity reports. 2015; 4(4): 477-483.

Script: Recent research has shown that the quality and elements of the outdoor environment has an impact on child physical activity and social interaction. In this study, they found that children interacted more with each other and their environment when that environment incorporated natural elements. This study shows that upgrading outdoor spaces with more natural themes may increase child physical activity and interaction.

Naturalized Learning Environment

- Nature based environment for children to learn and play
- Nature based elements to foster curiosity, active play, and interaction
- Uses adjacency between areas to help children interact with each other and more environments for better play experience
- Learn more (including cost-effective how-tos): <https://naturalearning.org/>

Photo credit: Natural Learning Initiative https://naturalearning.org/

Script: A "naturalized learning environment" is the term given to outdoor play spaces that use nature to facilitate learning and play. Though the term sounds complicated and expensive, creating a naturalized learning environment can start with using existing resources and small changes. Naturalized learning environments also like to focus on having play areas next to each other to help children move from activity to activity.

Naturalized Learning Environment- In Practice

- Dr. Nilda Cosco evaluated the effects of childcare centers upgrades across 27 schools
- Upgrades included teacher training, the addition of diverse outdoor settings, increasing shade, and planting fruit and vegetable gardens and trees.
- After the upgrades, there was an increase in physical activity in children and social interaction between faculty and children.
- So what? Upgrading outdoor facilities and training teachers may improve the quality of childcare facilities and increase child activity.

Outdoor environment **before** upgrades

Outdoor environment **after** upgrades

Cosco, N. et al. Childcare outdoor renovation as a built environment health promotion strategy: evaluating the preventing obesity by design intervention. American journal of health promotion. 2014; 18(2): 263-269.

Script: Recent research has shown that the outdoor play environment has an impact on child physical activity levels. In this study, they looked at changes in physical activity before and after upgrading the outdoor play environment (through providing shade, different environments, and fruit and vegetable gardens) and found that children's physical activity was higher in the upgraded outdoor play environment. This study shows that upgrading outdoor play environments with more natural elements may increase child physical activity.

Outdoor Play Design Best Practices

- Structures or Trees**
 - 1/2 -3/4 of shade to the outdoor play area
- Outdoor Area**
 - An open area for outdoor games, activities, and event.
 - Large enough for all children to run around safely
- Play Areas**
 - 8 or more play areas for preschoolers
- Path**
 - 5 feet or wider, curved and/or looped, connects to the building and different play areas

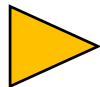
Script: So what are some of the key features? The best practices are focused on four main components, structure/trees, outdoor area, play areas, and a path. These changes can transform the environment and allow children to be more active and engaged. Think about your outdoor play environment, does it meet these best practices?

From the Experts – Dr. Nilda Cosco

Video (18:49)

YoutubeLink:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=74BXKKVmr5Q>



Play video on slide (18:49)

Gardens

Butterfly Garden: This garden contains butterfly-attracting flowers that are vibrant and provide food and shelter to local or migrating butterflies.

Container Garden: For yards with limited space, this type of garden can be grown from containers with small plants.

Demonstration Garden: This garden showcases vegetation that is specific to the region and is great for local sustainability practices.

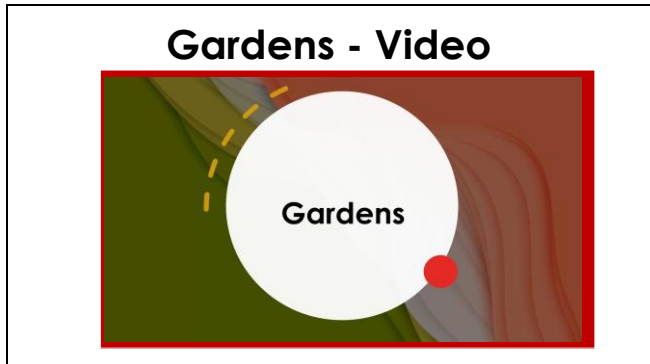
Edible Garden: Fruits, vegetables, and herbs can be grown in these gardens and used to cook or prepare snacks.

Organic Garden: This garden is sustainability focused with composting and recycling at its center.

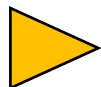
Water Garden: This form of gardening focuses on what can be grown and raised in an aquatic environment like a pond.

Gardening for physical activity and health eating supports children's development

Script: Speaking of the environment, one component of the module today is gardens. The six main types of gardens are shown here, including butterfly gardens, container gardens, demonstration gardens, edible gardens, organic gardens, and water gardens. The best practice is to have a garden that can grow herbs, fruits and/or vegetables to provide a snack during at least 1 season.



Video (3:02)



Play video on slide (3:01)



Script: The outdoor environment is more than just the design and garden components, it's also what you do! Two other components of the outdoor play environment are the activities that are done outdoors and play equipment. These are key components to get kids moving and engaged in the outdoors.



Script: There are five main types of activities for children to do outdoors. You may already know about free play and structured play, but there are ways to get kids engaged outdoors. Seasonal outdoor activities such as water play and decorating trees, are another type of activities where children can engage in the environment and weather! There are also walking trips, like a walking school bus, where the class goes walking together. There are also outdoor field trips to other locations.



Group Question: Ask participants what types of activities they do with the children outside? Of these five categories, which categories would they fall into? Choose one to three volunteers.

Portable Play Equipment

- Play items that move!
- Items that you can carry, push, or move
- Always available with no time limit

Examples

- Push and Pull Toys
- Ride on toys
- Balls
- Hula hoops
- Rocking and Twisting Toys
- Jump rope

Script: Along with activities, there is equipment! Portable play equipment is essential for children to engage in the environment, and includes anything that moves! The best practice is to have these items available at any time with no limits, and also a variety of items. Portable play equipment can include many things, such as jump ropes, rocking and twisting toys, hula hoops, ride on toys, and push mowers too!

Variety of Activities and Equipment

Activities Best Practice:

- A combination of activities are performed outside (all 5 options)
- Includes free play, structured learning opportunities, seasonal outdoor activities, walking trips, and outdoor field trips

Portable Play Best Practice:

- Large variety of equipment that can be used for children to carry, throw, push, ride, etc.
- Always available and no time restriction

Script: For both activities and portable play items, it's important to have a variety of options for the most benefit. This allows children to gain different and new experiences in the outdoor play environment, and keep them interested.

Research Spotlight

- This study compared the physical activity levels of 299 children (ages 2-5) across 11 childcare centers to determine the effects of upgrading outdoor equipment.
- Portable play equipment (balls, hula hoops, etc.) was related to more active play.
- Of the portable play equipment, balls were related to more active play compared to others.
- **So what?** Portable play equipment may lead to an increase in child physical activity.

Child Active Play Before and After Outdoor Upgrades

Center Conditions	Before Upgrade (minutes)	After Upgrade (minutes)
Non-upgraded Centers	34.32	53.40
Upgraded Centers	28.46	58.88

Ng M, et al. The Effect of Upgrades to Childcare Outdoor Spaces on Preschoolers' Physical Activity: Findings from a Natural Experiment. *International journal of environmental research and public health*. 2020;17(2):468.

Script: Recent research has shown that the outdoor environment, including portable play equipment, has an impact on child physical activity levels. In this study, they looked at changes in physical activity before and after upgrading the outdoor environment (through providing more portable play equipment and natural elements like grassy areas and plants). They found that portable play equipment resulted in more physical activity, almost twice as much as no upgrade. This study shows that upgrading outdoor environments with portable play equipment may help children be active.

Ms. Chelsey's Planting Puzzle

- Ms. Chelsey is a toddler teacher at the Friends and Family Early Learning Center
- Ms. Chelsey thinks the outdoor play environment could be improved, and is looking for new ideas.
- Ms. Chelsey thinks a good first step would be a garden, so she asked her director.
- Her director is interested, but would like Ms. Chelsey to take the initiative to get it started.
- Ms. Chelsey is new to gardening, and not sure where to start.
- She is also not sure if that is the only option to improve the outdoor play environment.



***Script:** Let's see the outdoor play environment in action. Ms. Chelsey is a toddler teacher at the Friends and Family Early Learning Center. Ms. Chelsey thinks the outdoor play environment could be improved, and is looking for new ideas. Ms. Chelsey thinks a good first step would be a garden, so she asked her director. Her director is interested, but would like Ms. Chelsey to take the initiative to get it started. Ms. Chelsey is new to gardening, and not sure where to start. She is also not sure if that is the only option to improve the outdoor play environment.*



Document used: Review and Reflect sheet

Review and Reflect

Review: Let's take a moment to review Ms. Chelsey's Planting Puzzle and apply what was discussed in the module.

1. What are the four main components of the outdoor play environment?
2. What is the best practice for portable play equipment?
3. What is the best practice for gardening?
4. Name three types of gardens Ms. Chelsey could consider starting.

Reflect: Take a moment to review your current outdoor playtime practices from the pre-assessment

5. Looking at pre-assessment question 3, 4, 5, and 6, what are your current practices?
6. How do your current practices compare to the best practices?

Remember to mark responses on your review and reflect sheet.

***Script:** Let's review Ms. Chelsey's Planting Puzzle and apply what we learned in this module to her current situation. Please answer these questions on your review and reflect sheet.*



Instructions: Ask trainees to complete answers to these questions on their Review and Reflect sheet. Give trainees up to 5 minutes to complete these questions.

Answers to Ms. Chelsey's Planting Puzzle



What are the four main components of the outdoor play environment?

Design, Gardening, Activities, and Portable Play Equipment



What is the best practice for portable play equipment?

A large variety of equipment that is available and with no time restrictions



What is the best practice for gardening?

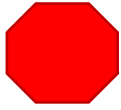
A garden that can grow herbs, fruits and/or vegetables to provide a snack during at least 1 season



Name three types of gardens Ms. Chelsey could consider starting:

Butterfly gardens, Container gardens, Demonstration gardens, Edible gardens, Organic gardens, Water gardens

***Script:** How'd you do? The answers to the questions are provided. Answers to questions 5 and 6 will depend on your pre-assessment responses.*



STOP: Please take a moment to answer questions on the difference between participant's answers and the ones provided.

If the participants have any questions on the YouTube video from the Natural Learning Initiative, you can encourage them to check out their website or contact them directly for more information.



Module Overview

- The outdoor play environment is important for helping children engage with nature and be active
- Environment design includes multiple components:
 - Structures for shade
 - Open area for play and games
 - Multiple play areas (8 or more for preschoolers)
 - Path for wheeled toys
- Garden that can grow herbs, fruits and/or vegetables to provide a snack for at least one season
- Do a variety of activities
- Wide variety of portable play equipment that is available and with no time restrictions

***Script:** In summary, the outdoor play environment is important for helping children be active and engage in the outdoors. The outdoor play environment includes four main components of design, garden, activities, and portable play equipment. In general, it's important to give children as many opportunities to engage in the environment as possible, through different area to explore, different items to garden or see in a garden, types of activities, and portable play toys.*

Education and Professional Development Section



**Education
and
Professional
Development**

***Script:** Let's talk more about education and professional development best practices.*

Education and Professional Development

- **Learning Objective A:** Stipulate how many times per year teachers and staff should receive professional development on outdoor play and learning.
- **Learning Objective B:** Name at least three topics that should be included in professional development on outdoor play and learning.
- **Learning Objective C:** Describe how many times per year families should receive education on outdoor play and learning.



Script: As a part of this module, we are going to discuss the frequency of training, the topics included in this training, and how to engage families in outdoor playtime too. Let's begin

Education and Professional Development Best Practices

Teachers and staff receive professional development on outdoor play and learning 2 or more times/year, including a variety of topics

- Recommended amount of outdoor playtime for children
- Using the outdoors to encourage children's physically active play
- Communicating with families about outdoor play and learning
- The program's policy on outdoor play and learning

Families should be offered education on outdoor play and learning 2 or more times/year

- Amount of outdoor playtime for children
- Using the outdoors to encourage children's physically active play
- The program's policy on outdoor play and learning

Script: Professional development is important for teachers and staff, as well as education for families. It is recommended both receive information on outdoor play at least two times per year, and on a variety of topics. Let's talk more about these best practices.

Benefits of Professional Development

- Stay current on best practices
- Gain new skills
- Provides updates to childcare policies
- Ensures everyone is getting the same information and focusing on same goal



Script: This training may be your first, fifth, or fiftieth professional development training, but they are all important. Professional development is important to keep teachers and staff up to date on best practices, and learn new skills to help them meet these best practices. It is also good time to remind everyone of what the policies are for the childcare. When everyone has the same information and focusing on the same goal, that is when you can really succeed.

Mixing it up

- Comprehensive approach
- Learn in different ways
- Focused topic
- Keeps interest



Script: Covering different topics is important so that children get the most out of outdoor playtime. Just like kids, it's important to try to learn in different ways both in and outside the classroom, or indoors and outdoors. Trying to have one training per year on all topics, or even less doesn't allow time to understand the topic and apply it. It also keeps it interesting when the professional development is on a "new" topics

Research Spotlight

- This study trained teachers across 36 childcare centers to facilitate outdoor play and recorded the effects on child active play.
- Teachers were more active in participating with children outdoors after the intervention.
- By playing more active roles in outdoor play time, teachers promoted more active play in children.
- So what?** Teachers who played more active roles outdoors were able to promote more child active play.

Category	Before Intervention	After Intervention
Teacher Activation	0.59	2.39
Girl Active Play	0.91	1.75
Boys Active Play	0.85	1.57

Yousang H. et al. The Effects of the PLAY2GO Program on Children's Physical Activity at Preschool Playgrounds in a Deprived Urban Area: A Randomized Controlled Trial. International journal of environmental research and public health. 2020; 17(1), 329.

Script: Recent research has shown that teachers play an important role in outdoor playtime. In this study, they looked at how teachers playing a more active role during outdoor play time affected levels of child active play and found that teachers with greater activation roles promoted child active play. This shows that teachers encouraging and engaging in outdoor play may help children be active.

Parents need info too

- Providing education, through hand outs or meetings, can help parents support outdoor play goals
- Ways they can support
 - Outdoor time at home
 - Encouraging active play while outdoors at home
 - Provide clothing
 - Policy considerations

Script: Teachers and staff are not the only ones who need information, parents do too. Parents are an important part of the puzzle, and play a key role in helping meet a childcare's outdoor play and learning goals. It is important to engage them with the appropriate information multiple times per year. One idea is to give them a handout on outdoor play at the beginning of each season, which can allow them to revisit their clothing options too. Parents need similar information as provided in teacher and staff trainings.

Resources for Parents

Script: You don't have to start from scratch! As part of this training, we provided three handouts for parents on the topics suggested for the best practices. You are welcome to print these out and share them with the families at your childcare. These handouts are on the recommended amount of outdoor time, being active outdoors, and the childcare's outdoor play and learning policy – with an option to fill in the policy on the back of the sheet.



Documents used (optional): Let's Go Outside Handout, Let's Get Active Handout, Outdoor Play Policy Handout

Ms. Jessica's Inspired Idea

- Ms. Jessica is the director at the Friends and Family Early Learning Center
- She has been encouraging her teachers and staff to get children outdoors
- She was inspired by Ms. Chelsey's recent success with starting a garden, changing up her activities, and getting new play equipment.
- She wants her other teachers to be inspired too and thinks learning more about outdoor play might be the way to go.
- She's not sure when and what sort of topics on outdoor play she should include.



Script: Speaking of professional development and education, let's learn about what's going on with Ms. Jessica. Ms. Jessica is the director at the Friends and Family Early Learning Center. She has been encouraging her teachers and staff to get children outdoors. She was inspired by Ms. Chelsey's recent success with starting a garden, changing up her activities, and getting new portable play equipment. She wants her other teachers to be inspired too, and thinks learning more about outdoor play might be the way to go. She's not sure when and what sort of topics on outdoor play she should include.



Document used: Review and Reflect sheet

Review and Reflect

Review: Let's take a moment to review Ms. Jessica's Inspired Idea and apply what was discussed in the module.

1. What are two benefits to continued education?
2. How frequently should teachers and staff receive training on outdoor play and learning?
3. What topics should be included?
4. Who else should Ms. Jessica provide information too? And on what topics?

Reflect: Take a moment to review your current outdoor playtime practices from the pre-assessment

5. Looking at pre-assessment question 7, 8, 9, and 10, what is your childcare's current practice?
6. How do your current practices compare to the best practices?

Remember to mark responses on your review and reflect sheet.

Script: Let's review Ms. Jessica's Inspired Idea and apply what we learned in this module to her current situation. Please answer these questions on your review and reflect sheet.

Instructions: Ask trainees to complete answers to these questions on their Review and Reflect sheet. Give trainees up to 5 minutes to complete these questions.

Answers to Ms. Jessica's Inspired Idea

What are two benefits to continued education?

- Stay current on best practices
- Gain new skills
- Provides updates to childcare policies
- Ensures everyone is getting the same information

How frequently should teachers and staff receive training on outdoor play and learning?

- At least two times/year

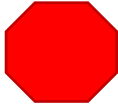
What topics should be included?

- Recommended amount of outdoor playtime for children
- Using the outdoors to encourage children's physically active play
- Communicating with families about outdoor play and learning
- The program's policy on outdoor play and learning

Who else should Ms. Jessica provide information too? And on what topics?

- Parents, at least two times/year
- Topics: amount of outdoor playtime for children, being physically active outdoors, program's policy on outdoor play and learning


Script: How'd you do? The answers to the questions are provided. Answers to questions 5 and 6 will depend on your pre-assessment responses.



STOP: Please take a moment to answer questions on the difference between participant's answers and the ones provided.

Module Overview

- Education and professional development is important so children can benefit from outdoor play
- Teachers, staff and parents can benefit from receiving education on outdoor play and learning at least two times/year
- A variety of topics on outdoor play time, being active, and the center's policy are recommended



Script: The purpose of this module was to review the best practices for education and professional development. In general, teachers, staff, and parents should receive training on outdoor play and learning twice a year, and on a variety of topics. Covering different topics and multiple trainings helps everyone work together towards the same goal.

Policy Section


Policy



Script: Now, let's talk about an outdoor play policy.

Policy

- **Learning Objective A:** Identify at least four components that should be included in an outdoor play and learning policy for their program.
- **Learning Objective B:** State the physical activity policy requirement for the state of Louisiana.



***Script:** As a part of this module, we are going to discuss the parts of an outdoor play and learning policy, along with the state requirements for a child physical activity policy. Let's get started!*

Outdoor Play and Learning Policies Best Practices

- A **written policy** that address outdoor play and learning that includes a variety of topics:
 - Amount of outdoor play time provided each day
 - Ensuring adequate total play time on inclement weather days
 - Shoes and clothes that allow children and teachers to play outdoors in all seasons
 - Safe sun exposure for children, teachers, and staff
 - Not taking away outdoor playtime to manage challenging behaviors
 - Professional development on outdoor play and learning
 - Education for families on outdoor play and learning

***Script:** The best practices for having an outdoor play and learning policy, include having a written policy that addresses a variety of outdoor play topics. Many of these outdoor play and learning topics were covered in the training today, so this module may also serve as a review.*

Importance of Policies

- Regulatory requirements
- Keep everyone responsible
- Identify glitches




***Script:** Policy is important for many reasons. First, some policies are required including by the department of health and education, so creating these policies ensure the childcare is compliant. Second, policies ensures everyone is being responsible in their area, and where they should focus. Third, these policies help identify when things don't work – or glitches. If everyone is following the policy, then we can review the policy for changes.*



Group Question: Ask the class if they can think of a time that they had to update a policy in their childcare setting. What prompted the change? Choose one to three volunteers.

Importance of Policies


- Builds a stronger team
- Everyone is on the same page!
- Teacher engagement ensures practicality
- Teacher involvement increases effectiveness



Script: Most importantly, policies ensure everyone is on the same page! As discussed in the past module on education and professional development, when everyone understands the goal, it is easier for everyone to work towards it. Having written policies ensures everyone is working towards the same goal. Teachers play an important role in policy change. When teachers get involved in policy, their needs are more likely to be considered, making the policy easier to implement. On top of that, when teachers are a part of policy change, the policy is more likely to be met, ensuring beneficial change for children's health.

Written vs Informal

- Written policies help continue the same focus and procedure when changes occur
- Written policies can also be communicated to parents
- **Examples:**
 - What would you tell new parents?
 - What would you tell a new teacher?
 - How could you address a parent complaint?



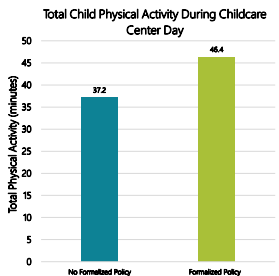
Script: What about how the policy is conveyed? It's important to have a written policy to help everyone have the same focus and procedure, -especially when changes occur, such as change in director or teacher, or when there is a new regulation. Written policies can also be more easily communicated to parents and help parents understand what is expected at the childcare. Think about situations when you are talking to a new parent, new teacher, or even get a parent complaint – would they all be told the same thing? In all situations it's important to have the same information.

Research Spotlight

Reminder: outdoor time is **not** the same as time at the childcare center!

- This study compared 27 childcare centers with 369 children (ages 3-5) and 84 teachers to determine which center characteristics promote active play.
- Children who attended childcare centers with a formal policy for outdoor time had more active play throughout the day.
- Formalized policy is written policy for the childcare center.
- **So what?** Developing formalized policy regarding outdoor time may increase child active play.

Total Child Physical Activity During Childcare Center Day



Center Conditions	Total Physical Activity (minutes)
No Formalized Policy	37.2
Formalized Policy	46.4

Chen C. et al. Preschool environment and preschool teacher's physical activity and their association with children's activity levels at preschool. PLoS one. 2020; 15(10): e0239838.

Script: Recent research has shown that formalized policy concerning outdoor play time and physical activity are important to child physical activity. In this study, they looked at which factors affect child physical activity during their day at childcare centers, and they found that a formalized policy was related to more child physical activity. This study shows that formalized policy regarding outdoor play time may help children be active.

Louisiana Physical Activity Licensing Regulations

Establish in writing and implement procedures for both ages

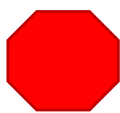
Remember that licensing regulations may differ from best practices!

Ages < 2 years
Time and space for at least 60 minutes of physical activity per day

Ages 2 years and older
Time and space for a minimum of 60 minutes per day of physical activity, including free play and teacher led play

Regulations are taken from Bulletin 137, Louisiana's Early Learning Site Licensing Regulation
<https://www.dhs.la.gov/media/suzpage/28v183.doc>

Script: So what are the regulations for child physical activity policy? Louisiana requires childcares to have a written policy on child physical activity, that at least meets these age specific standards. As you may notice, these regulations are very similar to the outdoor playtime best practices. They also include different types of activities, which were discussed in the outdoor play environment module – both free play and structured play. Childcares can always have more playtime for added benefit, as these are the minimum standards.



STOP: Please take a moment to remind participants on the difference between licensing and standards. This curriculum will focus on best practices.

Louisiana Outdoor Play Licensing Regulations

Reminder: outdoor time is not the same as time at the childcare center

- **Outdoor playtime**
 - Outdoor playtime is included in the schedule of the day's plan of activities
 - Drinking water shall be available indoors and outdoors to all children.
- **Outdoor play environment**
 - 75 square feet of outdoor play space/child
 - Outdoor play space shall be available for at least one third of licensing capacity
 - Available through direct exit
 - Enclosed with a permanent fence
 - Crawlspace should be inaccessible for children
 - Children should wash their hands upon coming in from outdoors
 - Play equipment of sufficient quantity and variety for indoor and outdoor use encouraging physical play and quiet play/activities which is appropriate to the needs and ages of the children shall be provided.

Regulations are taken from Chapter 19 of Bulletin 137, Louisiana's Early Learning Site Licensing Regulation
<https://www.dhs.la.gov/media/suzpage/28v161.doc>

Script: There are also regulations for outdoor playtime and space. These regulations may also be familiar as they also align with some of the outdoor playtime and outdoor play environment best practices. Especially the focus on scheduling activities and having a lot of play equipment available.

Outdoor Play and Learning Policy Components Best Practices

Outdoor playtime	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not taking away outdoor playtime to manage challenging behaviors • Amount of outdoor time • Ensuring adequate total play time on inclement weather days
Outdoor Play Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safe sun exposure for children, teachers, and staff
Education and Professional Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Professional development on outdoor play and learning • Education for families • Shoes and clothes that allow children and teachers to play outdoors in all seasons

Script: As for making a childcare outdoor play and learning policy, it is important to address multiple components of outdoor play and learning. You guess it, these components also relate to our past modules. Let's take a minute to talk more about each of them.

Outdoor Playtime Policies and Best Practices

Not taking away outdoor playtime to manage challenging behaviors

- Being outdoors is beneficial for child mental development, and helps with attention problems

Amount of outdoor playtime time

- Infants, 2 times/day, no standard
- Toddlers, 2 times/day, 60+ min
- Preschool, 3 times/day, 90+ minutes

Ensuring adequate total play time on inclement weather days

- Ways to go outdoors in hot, cold, rain, and dirt



Script: We first learned that outdoor playtime is important for child development – including mental development and can help with attention problems. Therefore, taking away outdoor playtime is actually the opposite of what we want to do, as being outdoors can help children with their development attention problems. It is also important that an outdoor play and learning policy include the amount of outdoor playtime so children can get the maximum benefit. Just like this module, we talked about opportunities to be active outdoors in all weathers, including water play and being festive.

Outdoor Play Environment Policies and Best Practices

Safe sun exposure for children, teachers, and staff

- Design component, including shade as part of the outdoor environment

Four main components of Outdoor Play Environment

- Design
- Garden
- Activities
- Portable Play Toys

Variety and availability



Photo credit: Natural Learning Initiative <https://naturallearning.org/>

Script: Outdoor play and learning policy should also address the outdoor play environment, including having a policy for safe sun and shade for children, teachers, and staff. Remember, shade (or structure and trees) was part of the design of the outdoor play environment. Other parts of the outdoor play environment that could be included in a policy include variety and availability of activities and portable play toys.

Education and Professional Development Policies and Best Practices

- **Professional development on outdoor play and learning**
 - Provided two times/year
 - Variety of topics: outdoor playtime, being active outdoors, communicating with parents, and policy
- **Education for families**
 - Provided two times/year
 - Variety of topics: outdoor playtime, being active outdoors, and policy
- **Shoes and clothes that allow children and teachers to play outdoors in all seasons**
 - Can be included in the education to families
 - Opportunities to be active in all weather

Script: Finally, it's important for an outdoor play and learning policy to include rules for education and professional development, or providing information to teachers, staff, and parents. For both, it's important to have these trainings multiple times a year and on different topics. One topic that should be shared with parents is providing shoes and clothes for children to go outdoors and be involved in nature during all seasons.

Ms. Chantel's Change

- Ms. Chantel is a director at a smaller childcare down the road, Little Growers.
- Ms. Chantel has begun to see more kids at the Friends and Family Early Learning Center outdoors and having fun!
- Ms. Chantel is now thinking about how she does outdoor play at her childcare.
- She knows there is a state policy for physical activity but doesn't know what an outdoor play policy would look like. Where should she start?



Script: Speaking of policy, Ms. Chantel is a director at a smaller childcare down the road, Little Growers. Ms. Chantel has begun to see more kids at the Friends and Family Early Learning Center outdoors and having fun! Ms. Chantel is now thinking about how she does outdoor play at her childcare. She knows there is a state policy for physical activity but doesn't know what an outdoor play policy would look like. Where should she start?



Document used: Review and Reflect sheet

Review and Reflect

Review: Let's take a moment to review Ms. Chantel's Change and apply what was discussed in the module.

1. What are two benefits to having an outdoor play policy?
2. What is the best practice for creating an outdoor play policy, written or informal?
3. What is the Louisiana licensing standard for a physical activity policy?
4. Name four components that should be in her outdoor play policy.

Reflect: Take a moment to review your current outdoor playtime practices from the pre-assessment

5. Looking at pre-assessment question 11 and 12, what is your childcare's current practice?
6. How do your current practices compare to the best practices?

Remember to mark responses on your review and reflect sheet

Script: Let's review Ms. Chantel's Change and apply what we learned in this module to her current situation. Please answer these questions on your review and reflect sheet.



Instructions: Ask trainees to complete answers to these questions on their Review and Reflect sheet. Give trainees up to 5 minutes to complete these questions.

Answers to Ms. Chantel's Change

What are two benefits to having an outdoor play policy?

- Regulatory requirements
- Keep everyone responsible
- Identify glitches
- Everyone is on the same page

What is the best practice for creating an outdoor play policy, written or informal?

- Written

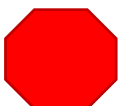
What is the Louisiana licensing standard for a physical activity policy?

- Ages < 2 years : Time and space for at least 60 minutes of physical activity per day
- Ages 2 years and older : Time and space for a minimum of 60 minutes per day of physical activity, including free play and teacher led play

Name four components that should be in her outdoor play policy.

- Amount of outdoor play time provided each day
- Ensuring adequate total play time on inclement weather days
- Shoes and clothes that allow children and teachers to play outdoors in all seasons
- Safe sun exposure for children, teachers, and staff
- Not taking away outdoor playtime to manage challenging behaviors
- Professional development on outdoor play and learning
- Education for families on outdoor play and learning

Script: How'd you do? The answers to the questions are provided. Answers to questions 5 and 6 will depend on your pre-assessment responses.



STOP: Please take a moment to answer questions on the difference between participant's answers and the ones provided.

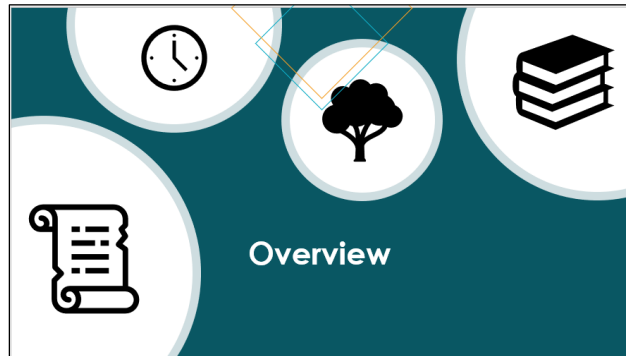


Module Overview

- Policies are important for many reasons including regulatory requirements, identifying responsibilities and problems
- Policies help everyone work towards the same goal
- A written policy that includes a variety of outdoor play practices helps support child development

***Script:** Overall, policies are important for many reasons, but mainly so that everyone is on the same page and working towards the same goal. Isn't it, teamwork makes the dream work? Policies should be written to ensure everyone is getting the same information, and on a variety of topics such as outdoor playtime, outdoor play environment, and education and professional development. A comprehensive outdoor play and learning policy can help teachers, staff, and parents work together, and ultimately help promote healthy child development.*

Overview



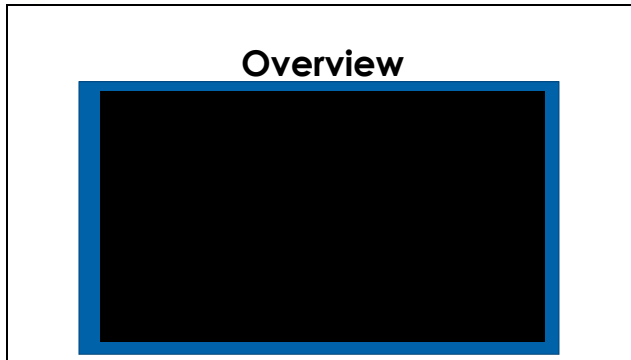
Overview

***Script:** Now, let's bring it all together!*

Purpose of Module

Build	• Build knowledge around outdoor play and learning
Give	• Give resources for outdoor play and learning
Help	• Help with current outdoor play and learning practices

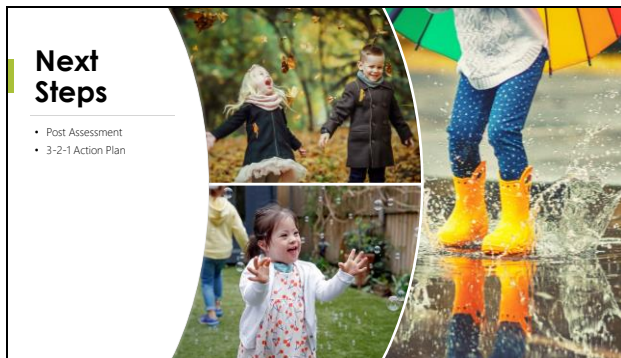
***Script:** As a reminder, the purpose of this training was to build upon your existing knowledge, give you resources, and ultimately help you reach your outdoor play and learning goals. Outdoor play is important for child physical, social, and mental development, therefore scheduling outdoor playtime, a supportive outdoor play environment, having education and professional development on outdoor play, and a policy on outdoor play will set children up to receive the maximum benefit from being outdoors.*



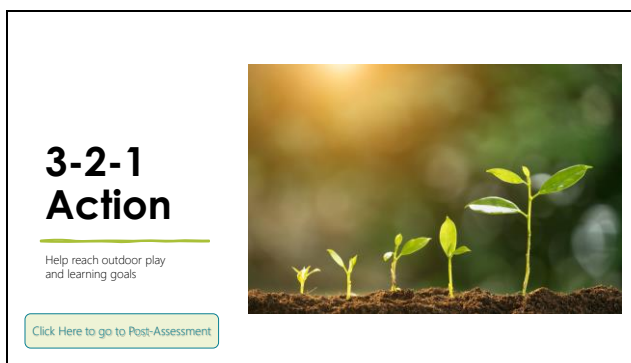
Video (5:13)



Play video on slide (5:13)

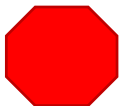


Script: Taken together, the outdoors is a great place to learn, be active with others, and have fun! The outdoors is for everyone, of all ages, and in all weather. Before we travel outdoors, let's take a moment to review and reflect on what we learned here today with the post-assessment and 3-2-1 action plan.



Script: Just like a plant, it needs continued attention and support to grow. We hope this training can give you the information to support your outdoor play and learning goals and grow and whatever stage you are at. Please reflect on your current practices in the pre-assessment worksheet and complete the post assessment and 3-2-1 action plan to help reach your outdoor play and learning goals.

The content of the curriculum is now finished. The slides following the “3-2-1” action plan slide include additional resources, which you can highlight or click through. We will move onto the post-assessment and 3-2-1 action plan. It is important that both components are performed.



STOP: Please take a moment to answer questions on the content before moving to the post-assessment.



Document used: Post-assessment, Post-assessment Answer key (Trainer only)



Instructions: Ask trainees to complete the post assessment on their own (5 minutes). Once everyone is complete, the class will go through the post-assessment together. The trainees can then review their answers compared to the post-assessment.


For each question, you should read the question and ask trainees what they answered. If there are different answers, you can ask the trainees to explain their reasoning.

Unlike the pre-assessment, you must answer each question to advance. Click the answer chosen and the slide will advance to another slide that shows whether the answer is right or wrong. From that slide, you can then continue to the next question.

Post-assessment

We want to see what you learned!
Answer the following questions and
indicate your answers on your sheet.

[Click Here to Begin Assessment](#)



Post-Assessment Slides

Post-assessment Question 1:

What is the best practice for time **preschool children** should spend outdoors per day?

0 or none	Check my answer
1-30 minutes	Check my answer
31-60 minutes	Check my answer
61-90 minutes	Check my answer
90+ minutes	Check my answer

Post-assessment Question 2:

What is the best practice for how frequently **infants** should go outdoors?

0 or none	Check my answer
1 time/day	Check my answer
2 times/day	Check my answer
3 or more times/day	Check my answer

Post-assessment Question 3:

What is the best practice for the amount and availability of portable toys available outdoors?

Portable toys include toys children can carry, throw, push, ride, or twirl, e.g., ride on toys or tumbling equipment

None	Few: 1-2 types are available, children take turns
Some: 3-4 types are available, children take turns	Many: 5+ types are available, 1 toy/child

Check my answer buttons are present for each option.

Post-assessment Question 4:

What is the **best practice** for having a garden for children to **grow herbs, vegetables, or fruits**?



YES, A GARDEN WITH OPTIONS TO SERVE HERBS, FRUITS, AND VEGETABLES



NO GARDEN IS REQUIRED

Post-assessment Question 5:

What is the **best practice** for how many **times per year** teachers should complete **professional development** on **outdoor play**?

None	Check my answer
1/year	Check my answer
2 or more /year	Check my answer
3 or more/year	Check my answer

Post-assessment Question 6:

What information is provided at these trainings?
(Click all that apply)

Recommended amount of outdoor playtime for children	Using the outdoors to encourage children's physical active play
Communicating with families about outdoor play and learning	Our program's policy on outdoor play and learning
Gardening for healthy eating and physical activity to support child development	Techniques for teaching children how to play different sports

Check my answer

Post-assessment Question 7:

What is the best practice for how many **times per year** parents receive **resources** on **outdoor activity**?

None	1/year
2 or more /year	3 or more/year

Check my answer buttons are present for each option.

Post-assessment Question 8:

What type of **information** should be provided to parents?
(Check all that apply)

Recommended amount of outdoor playtime for children	Using the outdoors to encourage children's physical active play
Color of children's shirt for outdoor play activities	Our program's policy on outdoor play and learning
The importance of gardening for healthy eating	All of the above

Check my answer

Post-assessment Question 9:

What topics should be included in a **written policy** on **outdoor play and learning**? *(Click all that apply)*

- Amount of outdoor playtime provided each day
- Ensuring adequate outdoor play time on inclement weather days
- Shoes and clothes that allow children and teachers to play outdoors in all seasons
- Safe sun exposure and protection for children, teachers, and staff
- Not taking away outdoor playtime to manage challenging behaviors
- Professional development on outdoor play and learning
- Colors for fall decorations
- Education for families on outdoor play and learning, and gardening for healthy eating
- All of the above

Check my answer

Post-assessment Question 10:

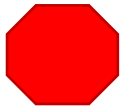
What is the **best practice** for outdoor play and learning **policies**?



YES, WRITTEN POLICY IS REQUIRED



NO, WRITTEN POLICY IS NOT REQUIRED



STOP: Before moving to the 3-2-1 action plan, ask if the trainees have any questions.

Once all questions are answered you can continue to the 3-2-1 Action Plan.



Document used: 3-2-1 Action Plan, completed Review and Reflect sheet



Instructions: Ask trainees to look over their Review and Reflect sheet, and notes from this training. Then ask them to complete 3-2-1 Action Plan on their own. Give trainees about 5 minutes to do so.

After 5 minutes



Instructions: Ask trainees if they would like to share the changes they are planning to make from the training. Choose one to three volunteers.

Open the floor for trainee's comments and questions.

Video Scripts

Video 1: Active in All Seasons (3:02)

Slide 1: Children can be active in all seasons and locations. Did you know children can be active outdoors (with proper clothing) in a wide range, of temperatures – from 30 to 90 degrees?! Let us take a look at some ways children can be active in common weather conditions.

Slide 2: First, we will start with hot weather. We know about that in Louisiana! In hot weather, it is important to seek shade and use sunscreen. Putting on sunscreen can be a good opportunity for children to practice self-care skills.

Slide 3: It can also be a great opportunity for water play. Water play can include a sprinkler, mini pool, or even slide. Working with parents to bring appropriate attire (swimsuit, towel, and swim diaper) can help with coordinating and implementing these fun days!

Slide 4: Children can also be active in cold weather. The change in season can be a great opportunity to learn about nature and colors, such as changing colors of the leaves. You can make a scavenger hunt for items that start with a certain letter or color also to keep kids interested during these cold months.

Slide 5: Cold weather is also a great time to be festive! Decorating a tree is a fun activity for children to join in on, and they will look forward to seeing the tree every day. Decorating trees doesn't always have to be lights, it can be other things like Mardi Gras beads. One idea is to ask children to bring beads, or another item to hang on the tree for the cold months.

Slide 6: Another consideration is the rainy months in Louisiana. Rainy days are a great way for children to learn about cause and effect, and explore how the environment changes in the wet weather. Though it may be colder when it rains, changing clothes quickly when children go inside helps ensure they are warm after the activity. Children are usually cold due to the outdoor temperature, rather than being wet.

Slide 7: Hot, cold, or rainy, there are opportunities for children to learn and grow in the outdoor environment. Now, we know we can't do it alone.

Slide 8: This training also includes a handout that you can give to parents to help them support your outdoor play and learning goals, by providing appropriate attire. You can also add your child care center's outdoor play and learning policy on the back of the handout.

Video 2: Gardens (3:02)

Slide 0: Let's talk more about gardens.

Slide 1: A garden is a great way to get children outside and interested in the outdoor environment. Did you know there are more than one different types of gardens? Let's take a look at the different types of gardens.

Slide 2: One type of garden is a butterfly garden, providing both food and shelter for butterflies. Creating a butterfly garden may help children learn about wildlife and science.

Slide 3: Another type of garden is a container garden. These can be done in and outside, and are a great option if there is limited space. If you are thinking of going big, there is also a demonstration garden. These larger gardens are great to show off different types of edible and non-edible plants, and potentially provide food for local areas.

Slide 4: You can also "go green" by creating an organic garden. This type of garden focuses on using reusable materials, such as composting, to support plant life.

Slide 5: What about embracing Louisiana's rainy weather? There is also a water garden which focuses on growing aquatic plant life. This innovative garden can be done in a pond or other water area.

Slide 6: But of course, you can also create an edible garden which has herbs, fruit, and vegetables for children to eat as snacks – which is the best practice. Exposure to fruits and vegetables in gardening can help children try these foods at meal times.

Slide 7: With all gardens, there is maintenance required, so they may need attention daily, weekly, or yearly. As with planting, all you need is a good first step (or seed). Trying a small garden is a good step towards improving the outdoor play and learning environment.

Slide 8: Check out these additional resources here and at the end of the presentation about gardening to get started.

Video 3: Overview (5:12)

Slide 0: This training focused on outdoor play and learning, let's review what we learned.

Slide 1: We first learned that outdoor play and learning is important for child development, as it promotes active play, exploring nature, and working with others. It can also help promote sleep schedules, and help with attention problems.

Slide 2: We also talked about the role of childcare. Many children spend the majority of their day in these settings, and during their main waking hours. Childcare is already a critical part of child growth, and a great opportunity for children to interact with kids their own age. It seems natural, that childcare and outdoor playtime would go together.

Slide 3: For outdoor playtime, there are age specific standards. In general children should go outdoors at least twice a day, and for at least 60 minutes. We also learned that even infants can go outdoors, but we need to consider the environment and toys that are available when they go outside.

Slide 4: We also learned that children can be active in all climates, hot, cold, rainy, or dirt. Playing in the dirt helps with children's immune system, and change in season are a great way to make outdoor playtime educational.

Slide 5: Speaking of the environment, we learned there are four main components of outdoor play environment design – including structure or trees, outdoor area, play areas, and path. We discussed research that creating a naturalized learning environment can help children engage with nature.

Slide 6: Another part of the environment is gardens, though there are six types of gardens the best practice is to have a garden that provides herbs, fruit, and/or vegetables for snacks for at least one season. Starting small is a good first step, or seed to meet this best practice.

Slide 7: We also learned that the outdoor environment is more than design and gardens, its what children do and moveable toys are available. In general, it's important to have a variety of activities and equipment to help children explore the outdoors in different ways.

Slide 8: We also learned about the importance of education for families, and professional development for teachers and staff. Professional development helps everyone have the same information, stay current on best practices, and gain new skills.

Slide 9: The best practices for education and professional development are at least two times per year and on a variety of topics. These topics include outdoor playtime, being active outdoors, and childcare policy.

Slide 10: As a reminder, this training includes handouts which can be used as parent education on child outdoor time. One handout even focuses on parents bringing appropriate clothing, which is important for everyone to be outdoors in all seasons.

Slide 11: Finally, we learned about the importance of policy. It helps everyone in the childcare, teachers to parents, be on the same page and working towards the same goal. We discussed that it is important to have a written policy to also make sure everyone is getting the same information.

Slide 12: The outdoor play and learning policy should address multiple parts of outdoor play. Having this layered approach ensures that children are getting the most out of being outdoors, and continued success.

Slide 13: Taken together, outdoor play and learning is important for children to grow and play. Being outdoors more, with different options and in different settings helps foster early child growth.

Additional Resources

Natural Learning Initiative: Weather

- NLI provides some ideas on how to get kids engaging with the outdoors in different weather conditions:
 - [Winter Play](#)
 - [Summer Play-Beat the Heat](#)
 - [Summer Play: Affordable Misting Station](#)
 - [Fall: Pumpkin seeds](#)
 - [Children's Vegetable Gardens Introduction](#)
 - [Gardening: Growing Edibles in Containers](#)
 - [Gardening starting veggies indoors](#)
 - [Gardening Activity Guide](#)

Natural Learning Initiative Resources

- NLI offers a variety of resources providing tips and ideas for creating a naturalized learning environment
- Infosheets:
 - Original ideas for creating a naturalized environment
 - Affordable options/alternatives
 - More information on the benefits
- Parent Engagement:
 - How to get parents involved in developing naturalized environments
 - How parents can continue this in their own homes
 - <https://naturalearning.org/infosheets%26leaflets/>

Additional Resources

- Licensing
- <https://www.publichealthlawcenter.org/sites/default/files/LA%20Child%20Care%20Center.pdf>
- Outdoor safety guidelines based on temperature and weather:
 - <https://www.ok.gov/health2/documents/weatherwatchforchildren2.pdf>
 - <https://www.boystownpediatrics.org/knowledge-center/winter-outdoor-play-safety-guidelines>
 - <https://www.aap.org/en-us/advocacy-and-policy/aap-health-initiatives/Children-and-Disasters/Pages/Extreme-Temperatures-Heat-and-Cold.aspx>
- Outdoor activities for rainy days:
 - <https://rhythmsofplay.com/20-ways-to-play-in-the-rain/>
 - <https://www.verywellfamily.com/rainy-day-outdoor-activities-1257404>
 - <https://www.theempowerededucatoronline.com/2017/08/outdoor-rainy-day-play.html/>
- Snow/cold days:
 - <https://extension.psu.edu/programs/betterkidcare/knowledge-areas/environment-curriculum/activities/all-activities/outdoor-play-on-winter-days>
 - <https://www.takethemoutside.com/outdoor-winter-activities-for-toddlers/>

- Fall time activities (cool temperatures):
- <https://www.howweelearn.com/outdoor-fall-activities-for-preschoolers/>
- Hot days:
- <https://twopineadventure.com/simple-hot-day-activities/>
- <https://twopineadventure.com/nature-walk/>
- Gardening Ideas
- <https://www.loveyourlandscape.org/expert-advice/little-landscapers/kid-friendly-play-space/15-ideas-for-a-childrens-discovery-garden/>
- <https://gonapsacc.org/tips-and-materials/farm-to-e-c-e/5-gardening>
- https://gonapsacc.org/storage/tips_and_materials/starting%20a%20preschool%20garden_a%20menu%20of%20options_final.pdf
- <https://sfyl.ifas.ufl.edu/lawn-and-garden/types-of-gardens/>
- Activities to do Outdoors
- <https://activeforlife.com/18-ways-to-get-kids-outside/>
- <https://montessorimoms.wordpress.com/tag/tummy-time/>
- Getting Kids Active Outdoors
- <https://playworld.com/blog/getting-kids-outdoors-active/>
- <https://www.rei.com/blog/fitness/ideas-for-keeping-kids-active-when-home>

Research Highlighted

Outdoor Playtime

- Corcoran L, Steinley K, Grady S. Early Childhood Program Participation, Results from the National Household Education Surveys Program of 2016. NCES 2017101REV. Washington, DC: US Department of Education; 2017
- Raustorp, A. et al. Accelerometer measured level of physical activity indoors and outdoors during preschool time in Sweden and the United States. *Journal of Physical Activity and Health*. 2012; 6, 9.

Outdoor Environment

- Cosco, N. et al. Childcare outdoor renovation as a built environment health promotion strategy: evaluating the preventing obesity by design intervention. *American Journal of Health Promotion*. 2014;28(3 Suppl), S27–S32
- Herrington, S. et al. Beyond Physical Activity: The Importance of Play and Nature-Based Play Spaces for Children's Health and Development. *Current Obesity Reports*. 2015; 4(4), 477–483.
- Ng M. et al. The Effect of Upgrades to Childcare Outdoor Spaces on Preschoolers' Physical Activity: Findings from a Natural Experiment. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*. 2020; 17(2), 468.

Education and Professional Development

- Toussaint N. et al. The Effects of the PLAYTOD Program on Children's Physical Activity at Preschool Playgrounds in a Deprived Urban Area: A Randomized Controlled Trial. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*. 2020; 17(1), 329.

Outdoor Playtime Policy

- Chen C. et al. Preschool environment and preschool teacher's physical activity and their association with children's activity levels at preschool. *PloS One*. 2020; 15(10), e0239838.