Outdoor play in winter

Winter brings many wonderful opportunities for children to delight in seasonal changes while playing outdoors. But all too often cold or rainy days mean that many young children spend their day indoors engaged in quiet activities. Keep the following in mind:

- Playing outdoors in cold weather doesn’t cause colds—germs do. Playing outdoors will reduce the amount of time children and adults are exposed to germs while cooped up inside.
- Dress in layers and keep extra dry clothing for children who get wet or muddy.
- Open a window and let in the fresh air periodically. Overheated rooms with stale, dry air can be a health hazard. Change your furnace and air filters regularly and watch for mold.
- Use sunscreen to prevent sunburn and decrease the risk of developing skin cancer at a later age whenever your child is playing outdoors. Unless it’s actually raining, sun damage can occur whether it’s sunny or cloudy.
- The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that all trampolines be avoided due to the high number of injuries at all ages.
- Prevent slips and falls by wiping down wet outdoor equipment. Check for adequate cushioning under climbing equipment, as sand and bark may compact when wet.
- Never let toddlers play around water without constant supervision. It takes very little time and only a few inches of water for a puddle to become a drowning hazard.

And remember—have fun outdoors with your children. Even when the weather is less than perfect, it’s good for you too!

Resources
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