

Why You Need to Get Your Kids Outside to Play

What do we Know about Outside Play and Close Up work?

An important study about outside play by Dr. Li Deng at New England College of Optometry regarding 147 children had parents listing hours per week that their kids spent in various activities. During the school year time spent studying and reading for pleasure was about equal for normal sighted and nearsighted kids. Not surprisingly, the **nearsighted kids spent more time watching TV and less time in outside play during the school year and during summer vacation.**

In the Sydney Myopia Study, Dr. Kathryn Rose worked with 1765 six year olds and 2367 twelve year olds. **Students with who did a lot of reading and computer/tablet time without going outside much were more nearsighted** than those who did less and spent more time playing outdoors.

What can we conclude from these two key studies?

Simply put, those children who spend too much time on their smart phones, tablets, computers, reading and watching TV and don't go out and play are much more likely to be nearsighted in higher amounts and progress onto higher levels of myopia more quickly.

How much time is too much?

As a general guideline we tell parents that leisure activities (those not directly related to school work and homework) spent on electronic devices **should not exceed 1 hour per day! Plus, that should be matched up with 1 hour of outside activity.**

This does not necessarily mean playing sports; it just means play, taking a walk, doing yard work or shoveling snow, walking the dog (or the neighbor's dog); **anything outside** where the tablet or smart phone is left inside.

This can be challenging if the weather doesn't cooperate, but not every day is inclement and exceptions can be made. It all starts with parents carefully monitoring what is going on in their kid's downtime and giving them some guidelines to follow.

The primary goal of our Ortho-K System is to slow progressive myopia in children. As careful and thought out as that our approach is, limiting our children's time spent playing video games, surfing the net, watching videos, and engaging in social media can make that job easier and your child's OrthoK program more successful.