

論文の欧文要旨

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(Title)

A study on measures to encourage and the usefulness of outdoor play in early childhood

(Abstract)

This study had a three-fold aim within the context of early childhood: examine the relationship between outdoor play and social skills; the usefulness and actual status of outdoor play; environmental factors that influence engagement in outdoor play. The final goal of the study was proposing measures to increase outdoor play in early childhood.

In Chapter 1, we simultaneously examined screen time, physical activity, play types, and social skills in young children, as well as attempted to clarify the negative association between screen time and social skills while considering mediation effects. The results showed that outdoor play (e.g., hide-and-seek and tree climbing) may attenuate the negative effects of screen time on social health.

In Chapter 2, we measured executive functions, which can be considered as the cognitive basis of children's social skills, focusing on the number of people playing and the presence/absence of outdoor play experience, as well as examined the relationship between the number of outdoor play types, the number of people playing, and executive function. Our findings demonstrate that the inhibitory function of young children who played outdoors more frequently was higher than that of those who did not, and that young children who played outdoors more often and played with a larger number of children showed higher inhibitory function.

In Chapter 3, we examined lifestyle and family environmental factors related to play types and the number of people playing. Specifically, young children from dual-income families played less than those from one-income families.

In Chapter 4, as a preliminary step to creating an environment, we observed free play scenes in a preschool and examined the relationship of play type with social skills. The results showed that the sampled children engaged most frequently in tag and playground equipment play (averaging at 4.4 players), and that young children who frequently engaged in risky play exhibited prosocial behavior. The results of these chapters indicate that outdoor play content and the number of players have a positive effect on social skills in early childhood.

Based on the four research findings, we propose "guaranteeing a variety of play experiences in the preschool, including risky play," as a strategy to promote outdoor play, which is the final research objective.