

Climbing Trees: Getting Aussie Kids Back Outdoors Research Summary

In March 2011, Planet Ark commissioned an independent study,* sponsored by Toyota Australia, to investigate childhood interaction with nature and how this interaction is changing. This factsheet summarises the key findings from the research report, *Climbing Trees: Getting Aussie Kids Back Outside*. The full report is available at TreeDay.PlanetArk.org/ClimbingTrees.

The Decline in Outdoor Play in Australia

The research shows that there has been a dramatic shift in childhood activity from outdoor play to indoor activity in the space of one generation.

- 73% of respondents played outdoors more often than indoors when they were young compared to only 13% of their children



- 72% of respondents played outside every day as kids compared to only 35% of their children
- 1 in 10 children today play outside once a week or less.

The Nature of Outdoor Play

As well as playing outdoors less often, the research shows that the nature of children's outdoor activity in Australia is also changing.

- 73% of respondents said they played on the street when they were young compared to only 24% of their kids
- 64% of respondents said they climbed trees as kids but less than 20% of their children participate in this activity.



* A nationally representative sample of 1,002 Australians aged 14 to 65 years were surveyed between March 28 and April 4, 2011.





The Benefits of Outdoor Play

Even in light of this dramatic change in kids' activity, respondents have a clear belief in the benefits of active outdoor play.

- 92% of respondents agreed that outdoor play allows children to use their imaginations
- 93% of respondents agreed that outdoor play helps develop physical and motor skills
- 90% of respondents agreed that outdoor play provides an outlet for reducing everyday stress.

The Barriers to Outdoor Play

The research shows that the collapse in outdoor play can be attributed to a number of real or perceived barriers.

- Crime and safety concerns, as a barrier to outdoor play, have seen the most dramatic increase with 33% of respondents indicating this is a barrier today compared to only 9% who said it was a barrier when they were young
- Lack of time parents have to play outside with their children has also become a more significant obstacle – 26% of respondents agreed that this is a barrier today while 11% said it was a barrier when they were kids

- The amount of homework children have to do does not appear to be a barrier to outdoor play, with the reported time spent on homework remaining fairly consistent across the current and previous generations.

National Tree Day

The Planet Ark research shows that 77% of people recognise that National Tree Day encourages children to play outdoors and explore.

National Tree Day is Australia's largest tree planting and nature care event, where kids and their families can get outside and have fun in their local environment. With thousands of sites at schools, parks, gardens and other locations across the country, National Tree Day and Schools Tree Day are the perfect first step to getting Aussie kids and their families back outside.

National Tree Day 2011 is Sunday 31st July and Schools Tree Day is Friday 29th July.

For more information about National Tree Day, visit TreeDay.PlanetArk.org

