

Getting Kids Outside For Healthy Fun

(NAPSA)—Ensuring that children play outside is more important than ever—as studies show that children who play are healthier and do better in school. But where can parents find great places for their kids to play? And how can parents make sure their kids get the recommended 60 minutes of play every day?

As many as 50 percent of the 16,000 public school systems in the U.S. have eliminated or are considering eliminating recess. In addition, levels of outside play among children have decreased dramatically in the last 20 years.

“While academic subjects are obviously important, it is critical not to exclude opportunities for play from the school experience,” said Dr. Wendy Masi, dean of the Mailman Segal Institute for Early Childhood Studies at Nova Southeastern University.

“There’s no question that schools with great places to play offer children a substantially more well-rounded education,” said Masi, who is also a board member of KaBOOM!, a national nonprofit organization that envisions a great place to play within walking distance of every child in America.

Here are some simple steps to locating a great place to play:

- One easy reference is the Playspace Finder tool at www.kaboom.org. Thousands of people enter and rate playgrounds all around the country with maps, photos and ratings.
- Oftentimes, towns/cities have playground directories that you can either access in person or



With public schools eliminating recess, parents may want to ensure that there’s a fun, safe playspace nearby.

online to get your search started.

- Where do your friends take their children? What playgrounds do they recommend? Which ones did they enjoy the most? Collect the information and then share with everyone on the KaBOOM! Playspace Finder.

- Form a group of your friends and schedule regular playdates to bring their children out to play. Start small with your workplace and then watch as your group can grow as large as you like by word of mouth.

- Still can’t find that perfect playground? Consider building a playground in your community. It’s a lot easier than you might think.

You’ll find helpful tips on building a playground, such as toolkits, fundraising ideas, information on playground workshops and playground vendors at www.kaboom.org.