Can Digital Technology Enhance Outdoor Play and Learning?

Exploring Nature
- Used DT to explore the outdoor environment
- Captured visual images of their individual interests in nature
- Documented outdoor sounds, e.g., rustling of leaves

Practicing and Enhancing Physical Skills
- Created and videoed dance and gymnastic routines on the playground
- Viewed recordings and then adapted their routines
- Documented active playground games and explorations

Expressing Creativity
- Collaborated with peers to plan and implement creative play
- Videoed pavement drawings, dramatic play, and outdoor block structures
- Engaged in later reflection and celebration

CONCLUSION
If used judiciously, digital technology can enhance outdoor play and learning, rather than supplant it. The apps used in this study contained very minimal content. This promoted children’s engagement with the world around them as they created the content for their slideshows. Educators in this study were provided with pedagogical resources and strategies. This supported them as they guided children to use the apps in ways that fostered and extended children’s learning and play while outdoors. These resources also included strategies that encouraged children to be active rather than sedentary while using the open-ended apps. This study illustrated that DT can enhance outdoor play and learning if the digital technology is open-ended, the program is play-based, and children have sufficient time and support to become independent DT users.