Bring children and nature back together

Green Hearts Institute for Nature in Childhood

The Thunder Tree
Robert Michael Phillips

"can teach us to care enough for all the land,
the forests and the fields. We teach that
Everybody has a ditch or a right to. For only
our nails and our sense of place get under our skin.
There’s trees that are breath down, when the earth gets under
create roots, eat roots, eat roots. These are places of initiation,
a ditch somewhere – or a creek, meadow, in coming to land in a troubled world.

Scott Russell Smolars – "A Consolatoria's Manifesto"

A sky above a sunsets, a kiss of wind;
a puddle in a puddle, a tree for climbing,
ill bugs on sidewalk, a swarm of
the world that humans have not made –
outdoors, where they can meet and savor
We need to give them (children) time

and why you should?

More Outdoor Play

How to give your children

To Nature Play

A Parents' Guide

By Ken Fisch
Long-term impacts will be very rapid — and we don’t even have a hypothesis about what the disappearance of outdoor play, have been a major factor in the outcome of over the past 20 years. They gave home computers, digital music devices, television, and video games have all been developed and accessed by children. Young children are more likely to become overweight, sedentary, and dairy faster than ever before.

In recent years, however, the focus has shifted to childhood obesity. As a result, childhood obesity has increased dramatically and now affects children of all ages. The prevalence of obesity is on the rise, and the impacts are significant. Childhood obesity is linked to a range of health problems, including type 2 diabetes, heart disease, and certain cancers. It is also associated with poor mental health outcomes, including depression and anxiety.

Do your own children play that way?

Just “mucking around” in the woods. A daydreaming in your secret spot. A building stick forts or teepee houses. Exploring little creeks and ponds. Catching fireflies and frogs. Digging holes to China. A lot of nature-based play. For instance: mnemonics, preferring outdoors and included previous favorite activities. What are your favorite memories of childhood play?

What Happened to Outdoor Play?

- Kids free time dropped by 80% between 1977 and 1997.
- Sports: music lessons; interest: church groups; etc.
- Children’s free time was diminished due to longer school days.
- Programs are being reorganized.
- Today, children’s access to open green play spaces is often more distant and/or more dangerous than it was in the past.
- Fewer children play outside, and many outdoor activities such as team sports, music lessons, interest groups, etc.
- What are your favorite memories of childhood play?

INTRODUCTION
It's important to play outside, not just in nature. Exposing children to natural elements like trees, rocks, and water can stimulate their senses and promote cognitive development. Outdoor play is crucial for children's growth and development. As they explore their environment, they develop motor skills, social skills, and problem-solving abilities. It's not just about physical exercise; it's about the cognitive and emotional benefits as well.

Why does it matter?

For countless generations, nature play has been a defining part of child development. Nature play is not just about physical activity; it's about fostering curiosity, creativity, and a deep connection with the natural world. It's about creating opportunities for children to connect with the environment, learn about the world around them, and develop a sense of responsibility for the planet.

Children who spend time in nature are more likely to develop a love for the outdoors and become stewards of the environment. They learn to appreciate the beauty and diversity of the natural world, which can lead to a greater sense of empathy and compassion. Nature play also helps children develop essential skills like resilience, adaptability, and problem-solving.

In conclusion, nature play is vital for children's growth and development. It's an essential part of their education and a foundation for a healthy, fulfilling life. Let's support our children by giving them the gift of nature play and the opportunity to explore the world around them. 

Three keys for great nature play:

1. **The right kind of place**: Choose places with diverse natural elements such as trees, rocks, and water. These areas should be safe and conducive to outdoor play.
2. **The right kind of play**: Encourage a variety of activities that stimulate different senses and skills. This could include climbing, building, and exploring natural features.
3. **Instructive guidance**: Provide guidance and structure to ensure safety and engagement. This could involve games, challenges, or guided exploration.

By recognizing the importance of nature play and creating opportunities for children to engage in it, we can help them develop into well-rounded, resilient, and responsible members of society.
The world is mud-luscious and puddle-wonderful!

If you keep your children away from nature and encourage them to spend time indoors, they will miss out on the simple pleasures of nature. Nature is a source of endless adventure and discovery. It provides children with the opportunity to explore and learn about the natural world.

Show Your Kids the Door!

And resources for getting started. The following pages provide a few simple ideas for growing up green. The following pages will be the crucial first step in nature-based play into their lives. It will be the crucial first step in life-long love of the outdoors. Here’s a few, but only a fraction of nature's possibilities.

How Can Parents Restore Nature Play?

3. The Right Kind of Play
them and have them delivered. If your don't have large rocks in your yard, you can buy
mountain. If you don't have large rocks in your yard, you can buy
climbing and pretend play — either down or a jungle gym/bouler.

Rocks & Boulder: Large smooth boulders
which underneath will help cushion any slips.

Wooden climbing set/crystal rock

ladder from the lowest step by adding
specializing tree: you can help by hanging a rope

without climbing trees. If you have a strong

Trees to climb: Have kids ever grown up

strike it down partway thru it if so it can't unexpectedly roll.

A good idea is to have a safe place for one they have their own

floor plan of their own. If you don't have one

Play area: A large bag can be a fort, a sandbox, a beach, a play

Plants, Plants, and More Plants! Ty to

occurring plants in front of a solid fence

or mounding can be created by planting

their own secret spots and a hidden

under a tree/secret. Sandy, glass, or cement

crete little nooks that will be kid-sized.

Shrubs/scapes: Plants shrubs in loose groups to

hold swing a hammock chair. A comfy chair or a real hammock.

Seating: Kids cherish quiet time outside, too. So create one or more

water: Kids love water play. Provide water from a hose or a faucet, a

Wet Play: Large molds of loose dirt are an endless for kids —

Digging Pit: Create a 6-foot-square digging area by removing grass

and loosing the soil with a garden fork or spade. If you have

Digging Pit: Large molds of loose dirt are an endless for kids —

Dirty Play: Large molds of loose dirt are an endless for kids —

After a rain, your kids won't mind a bit of pride dirt on hands, even!

Kids dig in. After digging pit turn into giant mud puddles

of sand. Provide small shovels, spades, and buckets and let your

heavy clay soil. You may want to lighten it by mixing in a few bags

of sand. Provide small shovels, spades, and buckets and let your

ocean or pond.
You can also use long garden stakes or bamboo poles to make a teepee frame about six feet high. You will have to dig holes in the ground where you want the base of the poles to be planted.

Planting Flowers: Grow sunflowers in a hollow square about five or six feet square. Sunflowers have been popular for many years and are easy to grow. They require a lot of space, so they are great for large, open areas. They also attract bees and butterflies, which are beneficial for the garden.

A great outdoor activity for every child and adult is to create a garden that is fun and educational. This is a great way to teach kids about the importance of taking care of the Earth. You can also create a garden that is fun for the whole family. You can start by planting some flowers and vegetables in your garden. This will give you a chance to grow your own food and be more in control of what you eat.

The Cat's Meow: A butterfly garden is a great way to attract butterflies and other pollinators to your garden. This can be a fun activity for kids of all ages. You can start by planting flowers that butterflies like, such as daisies, sunflowers, and lavender. You can also add some butterflies to the garden by purchasing them at a local nursery or by catching them in the wild.

Theoll: In addition to the veggie garden, all children should have the chance to grow their own food. This can be done by starting small and gradually increasing the size of the garden. You can also use compost to help the soil thrive by enriching it with nutrients that are essential for plant growth. This is a great way to teach kids about the importance of taking care of the Earth and the environment.
Today's Young children are controlled by the
display their treasures (well, at least the non-living ones). Display your treasures and give them a little dedicated space where they can
outfits. Sometimes it's a good idea to have a few field guides in the house. Geology books and weather books are good for
outdoors. They'll want to know what they're seeing.

Look It Up: Once your kids begin looking the
Sequencer: Since you're looking for natural

Put out a bird feeder or two. Use hanging tube
Feed the birds: Pluck out bird feeder or two. Use hanging tube
Feed the birds: Pluck out bird feeder or two. Use hanging tube
Free choice: Kids-only outdoor explorations give them

We aer an outing to put the rocks back in the same spots)
Check color, look for unusual-looking droplets. Lay
Try making a good collection of insects. Look under
A slippery grass rope closer. Now, play in the rain at a warm

Walk in the Creek: If your yard or neighborhood has
Wear old tennis shoes or boots for this excursion.

Return after dinner with a lantern and a flash guide.

Wet soot, and not a dry guide.

Worm habitat: On a hot summer's day, hang a wide bed sheet on your

Plant Things: Planting trees, shrubs, and flowers with your children

Picnic Under the Stars: If your yard doesn't

and a rain tent are just steps away?

This can be a real advantage for young

Family Nature Activities: But here are a few to try in your own yard:

Free choice: Kids-only outdoor explorations give them

Play AS A FAMILY
only lasts a few minutes. Teach your children to recognize it.

Swimming Pools: This common plant causes a burning itch but it
is tolerated usually helping in the short run. Time is not
enough. Over-the-counter
acids such as hydrochloric acid used in swimming pools. Washing your hands and water
will help to prevent future problems. Help your kids learn to

North America — native in people not in plants that can carry it.

If the dangerous section of pool has not been found in
breeding by avoiding any stagnant or standing water in your yard.
West Nile Virus: This virus is spread by mosquitoes. Not less
than 15% of people who are infected ever become severely ill.

Here are a few tips to keep your children's notice play safe:

earth, their original habitat. These can be deadly if not treated.

fruits, vegetables, and scrambled eggs. Tick off the check box
to keep your kids away from nuts and seeds. Look for soap
otherwise you may risk getting an allergic reaction.

You should always consider safety. Don't put obstacles

Keep It Safe!
ABOUT GREEN HEARTS

Spread the word.

through the efforts of caring parents like you.

Restoring nature on private property is a potential site for the

Any place where children regularly play is a potential site for the

Green Hearts is a nonprofit conservation organization dedicated to

Spread the word.

They have had contact with water that might be polluted.

So teach your children to avoid touching mushrooms or
gastrointestinal tract. Therefore, if you or your child

either get very near to home, will remove most of the danger.

Watchful: All kids should be taught to be cautious with any

Animals that act strange or sneaky seem too friendly or look ill

But teach your kids to respect wildlife and to stay away from any

Other wildlife: The danger from other wild animals is very small.

They may cause the animals whose distress.

If unusual sounds live in your area, teach your kids to recognize

Compromise with brims.

Continue to instruct your children and have them wear

Clothes that are soaked through.

Weather: In very hot weather kids should avoid

Teach respect and caution for all water bodies.

Water: Get your children swimming lessons at a young age, and

Search for www.aquaed.com / www.pacificswimming.org /
you haven't approved, and learn the poisonous plants in your area.

Lessions in the L.A. Times. Though most cause only skin stings or

Other poisonous plants: There are many species of poisonous plants.
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Ideas on Preschools

- Encourage children to be outdoors and explore nature.
- Create nature-themed activities for children.
- Incorporate nature into daily routines.
- Use nature as a learning tool.
- Foster a love for nature and the environment.

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References

- American Public Health Association (2002). "Healthy Schools - Healthier Children." (available online)
- Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). (2004). "Green Schools Program." (available online)

Endnotes


Websites

- American Public Health Association
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
- Environmental Protection Agency

Books

- "Last Child in the Woods: Saving Our Children from Nature-Deficit Disorder" by Richard Louv (2005)
- "Outdoors: From Backyards to Landscapes - Activities, Games, and Ideas to Encourage Children to Explore the Outdoors" by690" Children's Book Committee (2005)
- "Nature's Playground: Activities in the Great Outdoors - Games and Ideas to Encourage Young Children to Explore the Outdoors" by690" Children's Book Committee (2005)