NATURE CAN IMPROVE ACADEMIC OUTCOMES

Spending time in nature enhances educational outcomes by improving children’s academic performance, focus, behavior and love of learning.

BETTER ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE
Learning in natural environments can:

- Boost performance in reading, writing, math, science and social studies
  1, 2, 3, 4, 5

- Enhance creativity, critical thinking and problem solving
  6

- Seeing nature from school buildings can foster academic success
  6, 7, 8

ENHANCED ATTENTION
Spending time in nature can help children focus their attention:

- Focus and attention
  10, 11, 12, 13

- ADHD symptoms
  14, 15

- The greener the setting, the better the focus
  14, 15

INCREASED ENGAGEMENT & ENTHUSIASM
Exploration and discovery through outdoor experiences can promote motivation to learn:

- Increased enthusiasm for learning
  1, 16

- Greater engagement with learning
  17

IMPROVED BEHAVIOR
Nature-based learning is associated with reduced aggression and fewer discipline problems:

- More impulse control
  10

- Less disruptive behavior
  20

ADDITIONAL RESEARCH ON THE BENEFITS OF NATURE AVAILABLE AT childrenandnature.org/research

SUPPORTING RESEARCH

C&NN recognizes that not all studies support causal statements.
Children & Nature
Being active in nature makes kids healthier.

- Children living within a 1/2 mile of a park are more likely to have higher levels of physical activity.
- There are more than 20,000 parks and 11,000 playgrounds—totaling over 1.5 million acres—in cities across the U.S.
- Children living within 2/3 mile of a park with a playground can be 5 times more likely to have a healthy weight.
- Exposure to nature can reduce stress levels by as much as 28% in children.
- AAP recommends children be physically active for at least 60 minutes throughout a day and limit time with electronic media to 2 hours per day.
- Even a 20-minute walk in nature can help children with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) concentrate better.
- Time spent outdoors is predictive of higher levels of physical activity in children.
- Children have lost 25% of playtime and 50% of unstructured outdoor activity over recent decades.
- Parents, friends, and family are the most influential to youth participation in outdoor activities.
- Outdoor exercise improves mental & physical well-being more so than indoor activity.
- Children who spend more time outdoors are less likely to be overweight by 27-41%.
- Nature Deficit Disorder was coined by author Richard Louv in 2005 to describe how children are spending less time outdoors and its impacts.

Sources:
- American Academy of Pediatrics
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
- The Trust for Public Land

Find out more: NEEFusa.org