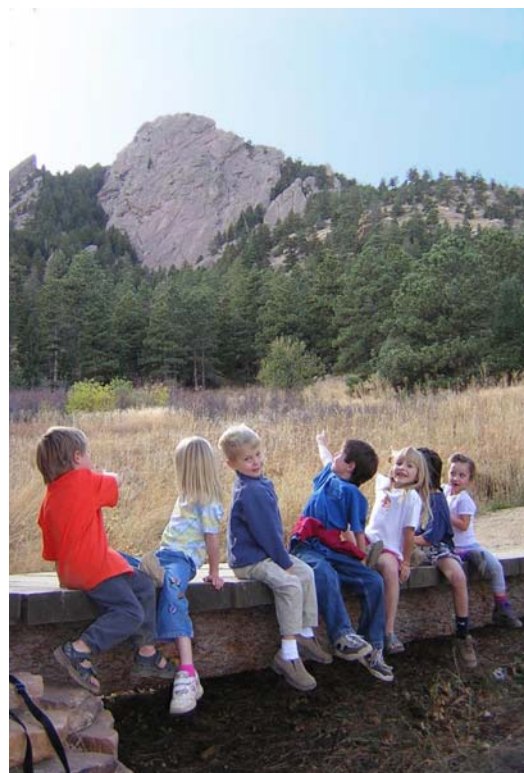




Lessons from the Field: Environmental Education and Outreach Initiatives to Connect Families to Nature



By: Jennelle Freeston
Interpretive Naturalist
City of Boulder Open Space and Mountain Parks
Regis University Master of Arts Program

Table of Contents

Part I. Dig In: Defining the Problem and Opportunities

The Importance of Addressing Nature-Deficit Disorder.....	p. 3
Lessons Learned from Existing Connection ton Nature Campaigns.....	p.5

Part II. Explore: Planning and Programming

Visualize Your Plan.....	p.10
Determine Goals and Objectives.....	p. 11
Identify Stakeholders and Target Audiences	p.12

Part III. Share: Communication, Implementation and Desired Outcome

Program Implementation.....	p.16
Desired Outcomes.....	p.17

Part IV: Reflect and Connect: Evaluating the Impact of Your Connection to Nature Initiatives

Evaluation.....	p.18
Conclusion.....	p. 19
References.....	p. 20
Appendices A-B.....	pgs 28-31





Part I. Dig In: Defining the Problem and Opportunities

The following document is meant to serve as a template to assist environmental educators and program managers in Colorado in creating successful connection to nature initiatives to get families outdoors. It includes research on nature deficit disorder, lessons learned from existing connection to nature campaigns, strategies for identifying target audiences, plans for determining goals, and ideas for connection to nature programming and ideas.

Taking into account recent research and statistics which suggest that today's children are not outdoors as much as previous generations, now more than ever there is an opportunity to build upon existing programs for families to encourage more unstructured time in nature with their children.

Going for a hike, visiting a park or enjoying a local creek as a family can be a rewarding and beneficial experience. Spending time in nature can reduce stress, improve family bonds, and create lasting memories. Time spent outdoors with a mentor or trusted adult has been found to help children develop a love of nature (Chawla, 2006). Parents, as well as caregivers such as grandparents, aunts and uncles can be given resources to help them utilize the outdoors.

We are now witnessing a first wave of parents who themselves missed out on formative experiences in nature. Therefore, they do not have their own memories in nature to draw upon (Christopher, 2010). For these parents who did not get a chance to connect with nature as a child, exploring the outdoors with their children can be a fulfilling experience, but they may need to be given tools and resources.

The Importance of Addressing Nature-Deficit Disorder

The Problem

Not long ago, a typical American childhood encompassed plenty of time for playing outside, catching bugs, riding bikes, and using one's imagination to stay occupied. However, research suggests that this type of childhood is less common than it used to be. A University of Michigan study estimates that there has been a "50% decrease in outdoor time over the last 25 years" (National Wildlife Federation, 2008, p. 9). On a daily basis, this means that some children are only outdoors seven *minutes* a day, when past generations used to play outdoors for several hours (National Wildlife Federation, 2010). Further research suggests that there continues to be a shift away from nature-based activities across America. Since 1987, there have been documented declines in visits to public lands, hunting and fishing license purchases, and time spent camping and hiking (Pergams and Zaradic, 2008). Today the average age of the typical U.S. outdoor enthusiast is 55 years old, which indicates that youth are disappearing from outdoor activities (WAEI, as cited in State of Colorado, 2010). Children of this generation have experienced a decrease in unstructured outdoor free play, which is defined by Burdette & Whitaker (2005) as "the spontaneous activity in which children engage to amuse and



occupy themselves” (p. 46). Instead, many of today’s young people are experiencing nature virtually and vicariously.

This phenomenon has been described as *nature-deficit disorder*, which is a growing disconnection from nature in communities, families, and individuals across the globe (Louv, 2005). Nature-deficit disorder is not an official medical diagnosis, but instead describes the consequences that people of all ages can experience from an alienation from nature.

The realities of a *plugged in* and *tuned out* childhood are concerning. Tim Gill, a British play advocate stated, “children are disappearing from the outdoors at an alarming rate, which would make them top of any conservationist’s list of endangered species if they were any other member of the animal kingdom” (World Forum, 2008, cover page). Direct contact with the outdoors is quickly being replaced by nature-related shows on the Discovery Channel and computer games (Kellert, 2005). Evidence shows that a detachment from nature can lead to higher rates of physical and emotional illnesses (Roszak et al, 1995). For example, “the childhood obesity rate has more than doubled in children age six to 11, and has tripled in adolescents age 12 to 19” (National Wildlife Federation, 2008, p. 10). Childhood obesity is defined as a body mass index (BMI) at or above the 95th percentile and is age and sex specific (Centers for Disease Control, 2011).

For the first time in American history, doctors are warning that children may have a lower life expectancy because obesity increases the risk of other illnesses such as diabetes, bone and joint problems, heart disease, depression and stress (Louv, 2008). Even in Colorado, which is one of the overall slimmest states in the nation, Colorado’s ranking for childhood obesity is slipping. For example, “Colorado’s rank for childhood obesity went from 3rd in 2003 to 23rd in 2007 with 14 percent of Colorado’s children classified as obese” (Colorado Health Foundation, 2009, p. 5).

Ramifications from nature-deficit disorder could mean lower voter support for conservation issues and declines in the protection and use of open spaces. Wray-Lake and colleagues (2009) analyzed over 10,000 responses from U.S. high school seniors since the 1990’s regarding environmental beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors. They found that over the last three decades, pro-environmental beliefs and actions have declined among this age group. In particular, Wray-Lake and colleagues found that adolescents were more likely to support consumer and government responsibility to protect the environment than to take personal action (Wray-Lake, 2009). Getting children re-immersed in nature at a younger age could help reduce physical ailments and increase time spent in nature and environmental attitudes into adulthood.

The Opportunity

Environmental educators are worried that today’s children will grow up not caring about nature or public lands. There is an opportunity for environmental educators to raise awareness among parents and caregivers about the benefits of nature, and the potential adverse consequences of a virtual childhood. When interviewed, most environmental educators and conservationists claim that spending time outside with a mentor helped them to develop a love of nature. Louise Chawla, a researcher with the University of Colorado at Boulder, surveyed dozens of environmental leaders from Norway and



Kentucky to find out what motivated them to protect the land. Their commonalities were having positive, direct experiences in nature with a trusted adult (2006). This study points to the importance of having families spend time together in nature.

When children play outdoors, they are more likely to recreate as adults, develop a conservation ethic, volunteer, recycle, vote for environmental causes and become recreation professionals (Chawla, 1999). Surveys of almost 800 adults in different parts of Britain reveal that people who have had frequent childhood experiences in natural spaces are more likely to visit such places as adults (Thompson, et al., 2008). Thompson and colleagues (2008) also found that adults who have had frequent childhood experiences in natural places tend to feel more comfortable visiting these places alone and have a more positive attitude towards these spaces as adults. This is evidence that exposure to natural places as children can affect attitudes and behaviors as adults.

Colorado environmental organizations and land management agencies are in a good position to be role models in the national movement to connect children to nature for many reasons. First, Colorado has over 30 million acres of open space lands (Theobald, Wilcox, & Whisman, 2007). Since the creation of the organization *Great Outdoors Colorado* in 1992, a portion of Colorado's lottery funds have helped to purchase open space, allowing the State to make leaps forward in land preservation. Second, Colorado enjoys year-round outdoor opportunity and many people move to Colorado for the lifestyle. The population of Colorado increased 31% between 1990 and 2000 (U.S. Census, 2000), with a projected additional increase of 14% by 2015. Outdoor recreation in Colorado has witnessed similar increases. For example, an estimated 3.5 million people annually visit Rocky Mountain National Park (Vaske & Donnelly, 2008). Recreation is a huge revenue generator in Colorado; in fact, the State of Colorado brings in up to 15 billion dollars a year from recreational activities. Finally, the state boasts of being one of the slimmest states with an obesity rate below 20% (State of Colorado, 2010).

Lessons Learned from Existing Connection to Nature Initiatives:

Lesson #1: Piggy-back on the Successes of other National, State & Local Efforts

There is no need to reinvent the wheel as there are many reputable organizations and government initiatives across the U.S. addressing nature-deficit disorder at the national, state and local levels. An international nature-deficit disorder advocacy group called the Children & Nature Network (C&NN) recently commissioned a study to provide a baseline measure of the growth of the "children and nature movement" in the U.S. and Canada as reported by grassroots leaders and representatives of the more than 70 campaigns. These campaigns are located in more than 40 states, and report reaching between 900,000 to 1.5 million participants during 2009 (C&NN & Fleming, 2010).

The success of campaigns to address nature-deficit disorder, childhood obesity, and health concerns has been attributed to the fact that Richard Louv's argument in *The Last Child in the Woods*,

touched a broad cross-section of society. It addressed the mother concerned about the



hours her son spent playing video games; the teacher who faced fidgeting children in schools that had removed recess from the school day; the pediatrician who saw overweight patients at even younger ages; environmental groups that saw fewer young people getting involved. Suddenly, it seemed people with a diverse spectrum of concerns found something in common to rally behind (Laine, 2010. p 1).

Resources

The Children & Nature Network created several useful resources to help communities and families create connection to nature campaigns. One is called, *A Community Action Guide: Building the Children & Nature Movement from the Ground Up (C&NN and Civic Results, 2008)*. The second one is a tool kit called the *Nature Clubs for Families Tool Kit: Do it Yourself, Do it Now (C&NN 2008)*. The Children & Nature Network has reported that more than 6,000 Tool Kits were downloaded by the fall of 2009 (Personal Communication, 2009). Finally, they have a program called *Nature Rocks*, which provides families with an online nature activity database that is searchable by time availability, age of the children, and setting (C&NN, 2008).

In Colorado, Lt. Governor Barbara O'Brien launched the *Colorado Kids Outdoors Initiative* in 2009 to "raise awareness and learn more about the alarming disconnect between youth and the outdoors"(State of Colorado, 2010, I.). As a part of a state-wide tour, the Lt. Governor traveled to 11 locations across Colorado to meet with over 600 stakeholders from various sectors to get ideas on how to address nature-deficit disorder.

The *Colorado Kids Outdoors Initiative* includes a *Colorado Kids' Outdoor Bill of Rights* listing ten things that all Colorado children under 18 should get the chance to do, such as explore one of Colorado's many local, state and national parks, as well play in the dirt to learn about Colorado from the ground up (State of Colorado, 2010). Since then, the *Colorado Kids Outdoor Bill of Rights* has received close to 1,000 downloads off of the State of Colorado Tourism webpage (Personal Communication, 2010). While this number is not staggering, linking your agency's work with this campaign, can help give the cause more credibility and support.

The *Colorado Kids Outdoors Initiative* also created a *Toolkit for Communities* which includes an assessment tool for communities, ideas to get kids outside, and potential grant and funding sources to launch community programs and projects (State of Colorado, 2010). Recently, Colorado Governor Bill Ritter signed the "Colorado Kids Outdoors Grants Program" legislation (HB10-1131) into law. The legislation creates two grant programs to fund both a state environmental literacy plan and children's outdoors programs (CAEE, 2010).

Programs

More than half the groups reported offering workshops, programs, and family events. An example of a popular program is creating family nature clubs. Children & Nature Network estimates that over 500 new nature clubs for families have been created through schools, and neighborhoods.

The Executive Assistant from C&NN reported that creating Family Nature Clubs as well



as the Natural Leaders Network for Youth has helped to get many people in the outdoors (Personal Communication, 2010). Another creative idea from the Children & Nature Network is to create neighborhood play watch zones where neighbors will keep an eye out on kids who are playing in the area (C&NN, 2010).

The Children and Nature Connection out of Ft. Collins stated that nature-deficit disorder awareness presentations, *Last Child in the Woods* book studies/clubs for parents, partnerships with health care professionals and information on their website have been a successful way to get the word out about connecting children to nature (Personal Communication, 2010).

Findings from the Lt. Governor's tour, as well as from other nature campaigns across the U.S. has been utilized to create a list containing specific program ideas to more effectively address nature-deficit disorder (see Appendix, A).

Recommendations:

- Utilize resources such as the Children & Nature Network's *Nature Clubs for Families Toolkit: Do it Yourself, Do it now!* (C&NN, 2008), the *Community Action Guide: Building the Children & Nature Movement from the Ground Up*, the *Nature Rocks activity database*, as well as the State of Colorado's Kids Outdoors Initiative *Toolkit for Communities, Families & Youth* (2010).
- Advertise that your agency can help kids to satisfy one of the ten *Colorado Kid's Outdoor Bill of Rights* items that all Colorado children should get the chance to do before they turn 18.
- Share resources, form partnerships, and help advertise other's initiatives.
- Create hands on, interactive experiences that bring the community together (see Appendix A).

Lesson # 2: Identify the Barriers of Your Target Audiences

Forces other than bad weather are keeping today's children indoors. Each U.S. community has unique barriers that keep children from getting outdoors. It is important to identify barriers so that you can create effective strategies to address that issue (McKenzie-Mohr, 1999). When given the chance, many kids would prefer to play outdoors, but there are a multitude of complex reasons why many children across the United States are not getting outside as much as they have in past decades. Some of these factors include safety concerns, stranger danger, technology, structured activities, organized sports, busy family schedules, and a lack of access to open space.

In Colorado, the Lt. Governor's tour found that the most common barriers keeping Colorado kids indoors were:

- Inadequate funding for programs
- Disparities among underserved youth
- Misconceptions about the safety of being outdoors, particularly the fear of strangers
- Intensive schedules and competing interests
- A lack access to nature
- A lack of knowledge about opportunities and need for more awareness about the



benefits of being outdoors
(State of Colorado, 2010 Report on the Colorado Kids Outdoors Initiative)

Recommendations:

- When developing programs for families in Colorado, consider creating programs which aim to address and reduce barriers identified in the Lt. Governor's report, or conduct your own focus groups about the barriers in your community.
- Apply for grants such as the "Colorado Kids Outdoors Grants Program" to fund transportation to programs to address funding concerns.
- Create programs to specifically target minority families.
- Communicate the safety of nature by creating programs such as the City of Boulder Open Space and Mountain Parks *DeHaunting Wild Things* around Halloween to debunk wildlife myths, and establish safe play zones in neighborhoods or parks.
- Let technology be your friend (post online scavenger hunts, geocaching).
- Offer events at different locations to bring awareness to the variety of public places and "nearby nature."
- Advertise your programs to churches, neighborhoods home owner's associations, and local businesses.

Lesson # 3: Focus on the Health Benefits of Nature

Children's health and overall well-being is one of the central messages of many existing connection to nature initiatives (Kruger et al, 2009). Because children's well-being is the main benefit when playing in nature, this issue has received the attention and support from many pediatricians. The Academy of Pediatrics recommends that children have "at least sixty minutes of unstructured play time each day" (as cited in National Wildlife Federation, 2008, p. 9). Although nature play might not be the cure to all children's health problems, nature has been proven to lessen the symptoms of illnesses such as obesity, ADHD, depression, and stress, as well as increase creativity, self-confidence, and academic achievement (Louv, 2008). A 2003 study conducted by Cornell assistant professor Nancy Wells focused on rural children and found that views of nature, including green plants and vistas, helped reduce stress among highly stressed children. Further, the more plants, green views, and access to natural play areas, the more positive the results (Wells & Evans, 2003).

Recommendations:

- Link to the National *Let's Move!* initiative to bring awareness to the fact that kids could get their 60 minutes per day of exercise by spending time outside to reduce childhood obesity and promote an overall healthy lifestyle.
- Use phrases such as *Daily Dose of Nature* and *Whole Child* to incorporate health.
- Get local health care professionals to give a testimonial or endorsement for your programs.

Lesson # 4 Identify the Correct Channel of Solid and Consistent Messaging

A baseline study commissioned by the Children & Nature Network found most nature initiatives "use several communication vehicles, including websites (75%), social networking tools such as Facebook and Twitter (64%), e-newsletters (50%), and print



newsletters (29%)” (C&NN & Fleming, 2010, p. 4). The National Wildlife Federation’s *Be Out There* Campaign reported that their work through “email, outreach to press and engaging parents online through social media and website partners has helped to spread the word about *Be Out There*” (Personal Communication, 2010).

Several connection to nature campaigns reported that visits to their websites and programs are growing in popularity. The National Wildlife Federation’s *Be Out There* campaign has reported that they have had over 167,000 visits to the site, and of those 10,000 families have signed a pledge to get outdoors. In addition, around 20,000 people have signed up for the *Be Out There* electronic newsletter. The most encouraging news is that most people stay on the webpage for an average of three minutes, which shows that they are engaged with the content (Personal Communication, 2010).

The Marketing Manager of the *Be Out There* campaign pointed out that it is critical to have solid messaging and concrete call-to-actions in order to fully maximize the effectiveness of all communication tools in reaching their target audiences.

Recommendations:

- Use similar language such as “nature-deficit disorder, connection to nature, daily dose of nature, whole child, and leave no child inside” to link your efforts to other campaigns.
- Create events to tie in with national efforts such as *National Kids to Parks Day* in May.



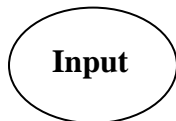
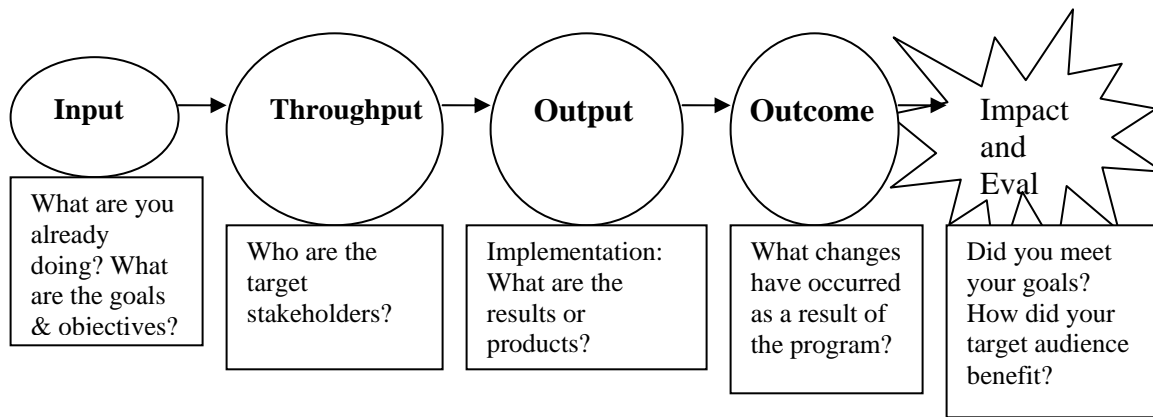
Part II. Explore: Planning and Programming



Visualize Your Plan

A planning logic model can be a helpful tool to create a connection to nature initiative because it can guide an organization through the planning, implementation, and evaluation process.

Figure 1: Adapted from a Planning Logic Model (Jacobson, 2009, p.52).



Assess Your Agency's Existing Connection to Nature Programming

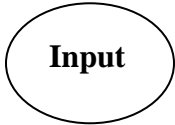
In order to create a connection to nature campaign, it is important to create a survey of actions that your agency is already doing to address nature-deficit disorder, and/or connect families to nature. This will help you to figure out how you can add to or enhance current programs.

Table 1: Current Programs to Connect Families to Nature

Current Program	Target Audience	Number of Programs offered	Approx Attendance



Total Numbers (Approximate)			



Determine Program Goals & Objectives

Program Goals:

Borrowing insight from Richard Louv, the desired situation for a connection to nature initiative might focus on getting parents and caregivers to realize that every child should be able to exercise his/her birthright to fully experience the natural world, which offers better health, improved learning abilities, and a sense of wonder (Louv, 2008).

Brainstorm at least 2-3 goals:

Goal # 1	
Goal # 2	
Goal # 3	

Program Objectives:

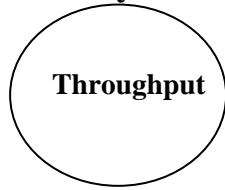
While program goals are generally broad, objectives should be **specific, measurable, audience-focused, relevant, and time-limited**, or SMART (Jacobson, 2009).

Brainstorm at least 2-3 SMART objects

Objective #1	
Objective #2	
Objective #3	



Identify Stakeholders and Target Audiences



It is important to identify the variety of stakeholders who will be affected by nature-deficit disorder and could benefit from a connection to nature initiative created by your agency. Realizing that “the general public does not exist” is a positive step in creating a specific and targeted communication campaign (Jacobson, 2009, p. 77).

There are many stakeholders involved and affected by the ramifications of nature-deficit disorder and reconnecting children to nature. For the purposes of this plan, a *target audience* will refer to “any group of people who share a common interest.” *Internal target audiences* will consist of employees, volunteer naturalists, and/or advisors of your agency and external target audiences will refer to a diverse group whose support must be won and maintained (Jacobson, 2009, p. 78). Understanding attitudes and motivations of a target stakeholder can help environmental educators create a more influential campaign to attain behavior change (Jacobson, 2009). In addition, “the success of communications lies primarily in winning support from the vast majority of the public sailing in the apathetic doldrums” (Jacobson, 2009, p. 26). In other words, it is often easier to convert a person who is neutral to a topic, than a person who is strongly against a topic.

Table 2: Potential Stakeholders and Target Audiences to Address Nature Deficit Disorder

Stakeholders	Target Audiences
Staff	Parents and Caregivers (be specific about demographics and reach)
Volunteers	Children (define age range)
Underserved Minority Populations	
Teachers	
Other agencies	
Health Professionals	
Community Members	

Gather Background Information/Studies about your Target Audiences

Children

All humans are affected by a decrease in exposure to nature. However, children are especially at risk because they are losing access to nature during some of the most formative times of their lives which may be causing physical, emotional, and psychological harm (Roszak, 1995). On the bright side, relatively short amounts of time spent in nature has been found to improve cognitive function, concentration, problem solving skills, mood, motor development, symptoms of ADD, stress and academic achievement (State of Colorado, 2010).

Playing outdoors involves the use of all five senses. Nature exposes the very young to an array of objects from big to small which helps them to sort and classify things, and



develop their cognitive functions (Kellert, 2005). Constant changing stimuli allows for opportunities to analyze and use critical thinking, to discover why snow melts, how long it takes for plants to grow, and life processes like birth, death and renewal.

Children's affective development or emotional intelligence is also improved and developed by spending time in nature. Within just a short amount of time, children can experience a range of emotions when interacting with insects, plants and animals: excitement, fear, sorrow, curiosity, dislike, attraction and more (Kellert, 2005). In a study of adults from different races, settings and backgrounds, over 96.5 percent of adults studied "identified the outdoors as being of critical emotional significance during their childhood" (Sebba, 1991).

Some children can develop *ecophobia* or a fear of nature because they learn about the threats to the Earth such as pollution, rainforest deforestation, global warming, and endangered species before developing a love and appreciation for nature (Sobel, 1996). Sobel (1996) suggests that children under the age of ten or eleven should not be told about environmental tragedies because it could engender dissociation, fear, and hopelessness (1996). He believes that children are not emotionally mature enough to deal with the heartbreaking realities that the natural world is in danger. He theorizes that any curriculum about endangered species or the rain forest destruction should be held off until middle school when children have more developed cognitive functions and have had a chance to bond with the natural environment in positive ways. Burroughs believes that "knowledge before love will not stick. But if love comes first, knowledge is sure to follow" (as cited in Sobel, 1996, p. 10). Teaching children about nature is not only important from a developmental perspective, but also to get them comfortable with nature so that love can replace fear, misunderstanding and despair.

Parents and caregivers

Parents and caregivers, such as such as grandparents, aunts, uncles, neighbors, and nannies play a critical role due to their direct influence on a child's connection to nature. Adults typically have control over how children spend their time and what they are allowed to do. In fact, "adult mentoring and priorities surrounding children's nature experiences may have a direct impact on whether children are encouraged to spend time outdoors" (Fraser, Heimlich & Yocco, 2010, p. 7). Clements, a researcher from Hofstra University, interviewed over 800 mothers across America to find out how often they played outside as children compared to their own children today, and found that 85% of them agreed that today's children play outdoors far less than children did a few years ago (2004). In a survey of 2,138 U.S. adults, nearly two-thirds reported that they were allowed to play freely near woods, streams, and other wild areas when they were young, but less than half say that they are willing to allow their children to experience this today (Fraser, Heimlich & Yocco, 2010). In fact, Clements found that many parents are aware of the positive impact that active outdoor play has on their child's development, but they do not know how to overcome the obstacles such as stranger danger, busy schedules, and access to open places to get their children outdoors (2004).

As mentioned earlier, some of the reasons that parents are not encouraging unstructured time spent outdoors include stranger danger, technology, time constraints, access to



nature, and peer pressure to know where your child is at all times. Results from a mail-in survey of both open-ended and closed-ended questions from 545 parents in the Denver and Ft. Collins area found that parents agreed that nature is beneficial for their children; however safety issues were their greatest concerns about spending time in nature (Stafford et al., 2009). Another study found that parents have a misconception that nature is something that is far away and requires transportation, time, and money (Fraser, Heimlich & Yocco, 2010).

Spending time in nature can benefit both children and adults, however many parents may not realize that they themselves are also suffering from a disconnection to nature. Some of these parents grew up in the digital age and are members of Generation Y, the first generation of adults that may not have played outside as kids. Fraser, Heimlich & Yocco (2010) found that these adults are not likely to tell stories about playing outside because they did not have as many experiences with nature as previous Gen X'ers or Baby Boomers. Fraser et al. found that when adults do not go outside, children are less likely to initiate going outdoors by themselves. When adults do spend time in green spaces, research has shown that adults have experienced reduced stress, lower blood pressure, positive moods, quicker recovery from illness, as well as greater life satisfaction (Maas, 2009). Finally, time spent in nature as a family can strengthen family bonds, improve communication and can have overall positive long lasting effects.

Many U.S. households contain single parents or dual working adults. As parents become increasingly busy, other caregivers with more time, such as retired grandparents, might be a great resource for busy parents. Grandparents come from the Baby Boomer generation and share a generational memory of what it was like to play outdoors as a child. Boomers are also known to be “a cause-oriented” generation and can play a vital role in the children and nature movement, and with their own grandchildren (C&NN, 2010).

Parents who are not aware of nature-deficit disorder and the benefits of nature, or are indifferent to nature may be easier to target for a connection to nature campaign, rather than parents who are greatly opposed to having their children play outdoors. In addition, assuming that most parents inherently want the best for their children, parents may want to make changes and create opportunities for both unstructured and structured time in nature. Connection to nature campaigns should benefit parents who currently do not get their kids outdoors, as well as parents who are looking for new ideas to get kids outdoors.

The desired outcome for a connection to nature campaign is that caregivers will increase their own time in nature to become better role models for their children.

Underserved Minority Populations

Focusing efforts to reach out to disadvantaged communities can go a long way toward creating opportunities for children. Underserved minority populations might stand to gain the largest benefit from time spent in nature because obesity and nature-deficit often exist in low-income neighborhoods due to a disproportional lack of access to nearby parks. For example, “in Los Angeles, African-American and Latino neighborhoods have access to less than 2 acres of park space for every 1,000 people, compared with Caucasian



neighborhoods which enjoy 31.8 acres of park space (Sherer, 2006, p. 7). Other studies have found that the Latino population is the fastest growing minority in the United States, but the least likely to visit national parks and natural areas (State of Colorado, 2010). Likewise, Boulder County's fastest growing minority is Latino or Hispanic at 13.1%, followed by "other" at 5.1% (U.S. Census Bureau, Boulder County Fact sheet, 2010)

Teachers

Teachers who currently do not get their students outdoors and teachers who would like to get new ideas on how to lead their own hikes will benefit from connecting their students with nature. Teachers can also be great advocates to communicate the importance of getting children outdoors and they can influence's children's awareness of the environment. Many schools across the U.S. have started to create school-yard habitats and school gardens to get kids outside.

However, teachers also feel pressured by No Child Left Behind regulations to have students perform well on standardized tests. This has forced many schools to cut interdisciplinary classes like physical education, art, music and recess to get math and science content in. Programs such as Project WILD, Project WET, and Project Learning Tree demonstrate that environmental education can be easily integrated into the science content already being taught and can provide children with real life experiences that they can apply to their academic learning.

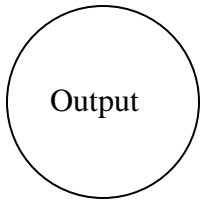
Health Professionals

Health professionals have started to partner with connection to nature initiatives by writing *Outdoor Play Prescriptions*, which remind parents to get outdoors with their children for health benefits. *Outdoor Play Prescriptions* also include a website where parents can find outdoor activities at every level from state to local zip codes (Chawla, 2010). Research has shown that a sedentary lifestyle among today's children has led to an obesity epidemic which has cost up to \$100 billion per year in healthcare expenses (NWF, 2008). In Colorado alone, 14.2% of children are considered obese (Colorado Health Foundation, 2009). In October 2010, Richard Louv spoke to over 3,000 pediatricians, nurses and other health professionals at the American Academy of Pediatrics Conference to encourage all health professionals to start writing *Outdoor Play Prescriptions* (C&NN, 2010).

Other agencies

Other environmental educators and Open Space Departments in the area, such as Boulder County Parks and Open Space, Ft. Collins Natural areas, as well as Jefferson County Parks and Open Space may be able to benefit from successes from other existing connection to nature initiatives. After creating pilot connection to nature initiatives during summer of 2011, OSMP CO staff will present findings at the state conferences such as the Colorado Alliance for Environmental Education's (CAEE) Teaching Outside of the Box and the annual Colorado Open Space Alliance (COSA) Conference.





Part III. Share – Communication, Implementation and Desired Outcome

Several action items and communication strategies must be achieved with each target audience to accomplish the program objectives, outcomes, and impact. The table below outlines the action strategies, communication content, communication channels, as well as associated costs.

It is important to recognize the following criteria when deciding on activities and messages to use to address target audiences in conservation campaigns (Jacobson, 2009):

1. Background, motivations, self-interest and habits of the target audience
2. Attributes, urgency, complexity and frequency of the message
3. Staff required to create programs
4. Cost

Target Audience	Action Strategies	Core Message & Communication Channel	Cost

Program Implementation

The implementation of a comprehensive connection to nature initiative for your agency could begin as a pilot program. Determine the time of year when you would like to roll it out: summer, school year, all year long?



Proposed Implementation Timeline

Task	Timeline	Staff	Cost
Total Costs			\$



Determine Your Desired Outcomes

It is important to decide ahead of time how you will define the success of your program. To help with this process, you can determine the following:

- Timeframe of the initiative
- Which staff and volunteers will participate
- How many programs you will create
- How many people you want your connection to nature initiative to reach
- How many materials you will hope to distribute
- What actions would you like people to take in response to your programs





Part IV: Reflect and Connect: Evaluating the Impact of Your Connection to Nature Initiatives

Evaluation is a vital part of the program implementation process because it “informs program managers and staff as to whether or not the program is worth the time, money and resources” (Jacobson, 2009, p. 72). Evaluation is the learning and verification stage that informs the program manager of the strengths and weakness of a program and, if need be, defines how to properly adjust a program for future success. The outcomes for a connection to nature initiative, specified in your SMART objectives will be measured and evaluated

throughout both the planning, implementation, and post-implementation phases so that potential changes can be made along the way.

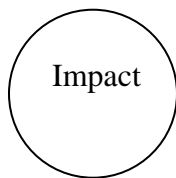
Implementation Phase Evaluation:

Program staff should seek feedback during the implementation phase through focus groups, evaluations, or surveys. Feedback about program ideas will better help to refine and improve on content and messaging during the programs.

Post-Implementation Phase Evaluation:

Program staff should conduct a post-implementation phase, which would consist of referring back to goals and objectives to see if they were met. Program staff will evaluate why or why not the objectives were met. They will also evaluate if the objectives realistic, and if there is any new research or information to inform the process for the future.

Evaluating Impact: What Changes Have Occurred As a Result of Your Programs?



- Did the connection to nature programs meet the goals, objectives and outcomes that you created?
- What information did your participant evaluations include?

Possible Impact from Connection to Nature Campaigns:

- Research may show that children will develop environmental ethics, will recreate when they get older, or could even pursue environmentally related careers (e.g.: City of Boulder Junior Ranger programs).
- Reports of healthier children and happier families e.g.: Boulder County childhood obesity levels would remain the same over time.



Conclusion:

There is an opportunity for environmental educators to raise awareness among parents and caregivers about the benefits of nature, nature-deficit disorder, and the potential adverse consequences of a virtual childhood. Organizations do not have to start from scratch as there are plenty of ideas and resources to share.

Connection to nature campaigns that your agency creates will not only benefit kids and caregivers, but may also help your agency to reach out to new audiences. Health and wellness benefits of nature can attract people from different political and religious beliefs; and therefore can attract a new base of supporters for your programs especially during times of uncertainty and budget deficits.

Finally, many children do not even realize what they are missing when they experience a childhood full of structured activities, indoor entertainment, and virtual stimulation. We must remember that nothing can replace direct experiences and contact with the outdoors. All children should be allowed to feel the wind through their hair, explore a creek or, dig in the dirt, and climb a tree. Nature is a full individual and intimate sensory experiences. Every child should have the right to decide if nature is right for him/her. Spending time in nature has many a cumulative effects that benefit children for years to come. Now your agency will have more tools and ideas to create programs to help connect future generations to the Earth.

*"In the end we will only conserve what we love. We will love only what we understand.
We will only understand what we are taught." ~ Baba Dioum*



References

- America's Great Outdoors Initiative (2010). Retrieved July 16, 2010 from <http://www.doi.gov/americasgreatoutdoors/Press-Release.cfm>
- Balmford, A., Clegg, L., Coulson, T., & Taylor, J. (2002). Why conservationists should heed Pokémon. *Science*, 295(5564), 2367-2367.
- Boulder County Youth Corps (2010). Retrieved July 9, 2010 from <http://www.bouldercounty.org/youthcorps/index.html>
- Burdette, H. L., & Whitaker, R.C. (2005). Resurrecting free play in young children: Looking beyond fitness and fatness to attention, affiliation and affect. *Archives of Pediatrics & Adolescent Medicine*, 159, 46-50.
- Carlsson-Paige, N. (2008). *Taking back childhood*. New York: Hudson Street Press.
- Chawla, L. (1999). Life paths into effective environmental action. *Journal of Environmental Education*, 31(1): 15-26. Retrieved July 8, 2010 from Academic One database.
- Chawla, L. (2010). *From backyards to parks and mountain peaks: Weaving nature into young people's lives*. PowerPoint Presentation for the Colorado Outdoor Recreation Resource Project (CORRP).
- Chawla, L. (2006). Learning to love the natural world enough to protect it. *Barn nr.*, 55 78.
- Children & Nature Network (C&NN). (2008). *Nature clubs for families toolkit: Do it yourself, do it now!* Retrieved, August, 21, 2008 from http://www.childrenandnature.org/downloads/NCFE_toolkit.pdf
- Children & Nature Network (C&NN). (2008). *Nature Rocks*. Retrieved January, 11, 2008 from <http://www.naturerocks.org/>



- Children & Nature Network (C&NN). (2008). *Children and nature 2008: A Report on the movement to reconnect children to the natural world*. Retrieved December 10, 2009, from <http://www.cnaturenet.org/uploads/CNMovement.pdf>
- Children & Nature Network & Civic Results (C&NN). (2008). *Community action guide: Building the children & nature movement from the ground up*. Retrieved September 8th, 2009 from <http://www.childrenandnature.org/downloads/CNActGuide1.1.pdf>
- Children & Nature Network (C&NN). (2010). *Homepage*. Retrieved July 5th, 2010 from <http://www.childrenandnature.org/>
- Children & Nature Network & Fleming (M.L). (2010). *Grassroots leadership survey: Findings of the 2009 Questionnaire*. Retrieved July 1, 2010 from <http://www.childrenandnature.org/downloads/C&NNGrassrootsSurvey2009.pdf>
- Christopher, T. (2010). *The green hour: A healthy dose of nature for happier, healthier, smarter kids*. Boston, MA: Trumpeter Books.
- City of Boulder Open Space and Mountain Parks (2010). Retrieved March 15, 2010 from http://www.bouldercolorado.gov/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=1166&Itemid=1086#mission.
- Clements, R. (2004). An investigation of the status of outdoor play. *Contemporary Issues in Early Childhood*, 5 (1), 68-80.
- Colorado Alliance for Environmental Education (CAEE) (2005). *Environmental Education Master Plan*. Retrieved July 9th from <http://www.cae.org/CEEMP/ceempfundee.html>
- Colorado Health Foundation (2009). *The Colorado Health Report Card*. Retrieved October 3, 2010 from http://www.coloradohealth.org/report_card.aspx



- Fraser, J., Heimlich J.E., & Yocco, V. (2010). American beliefs associated with *Encouraging children's nature experience opportunities*. Retrieved July 5, from Institute for learning Innovation. www.ilinet.org
- Glendinning, C. (1995). Technology, trauma, and the wild. In T. Roszak, M. E. Gomes, & A.D. Kanner, (Eds.), *Ecopsychology: Restoring the Earth, healing the mind* (pp. 111-121). San Francisco, CA: Sierra Club Books.
- Griswold, D. (1995), The practice of public relations. In, S. Jacobson. *Communication skills for conservation professionals* (2nd ed.). Washington: Island Press.
- Heirshberg, M.S. (2009). *Connecting Colorado's kids with nature*. Unpublished master's thesis, Regis University, Denver, Colorado.
- Jacobson, S.K. (2009). *Communication skills for conservation professionals* (2nd ed.). Washington: Island Press.
- Kellert, S.R. (2005). Building for life: Designing and understanding the human-nature connection. Washington: Island Press.
- Kline, J.D. (2006). Public demand for preserving local open space. *Society & Natural Resources: An International Journal*, 19(7), 645-659.
- Kruger, et al. (2009). Building on partnerships: Reconnecting kids with nature for health benefits. *Health Promotion Practice*, 11, 340-346. Retrieved July 5th from Sage Premier 2010 <http://hpp.sagepub.com.dml.regis.edu/cgi/reprint/11/3/340>.
- Laine, K (2010). *The nurture of nature: How one book sparked a movement to reconnect today's young people with the outdoors*. Appalachian Mountain Club Outdoors. May/June. Retrieved June 12, 2010 from <http://www.outdoors.org/publications/outdoors/2010/features/getting-kids-outdoors.cfm?RenderForPrint=1>



- Let's Move Outside. (2010). Retrieved June 28, 2010 from <http://www.letsmove.gov/>
- Louv, R. (2005). *Last child in the woods: Saving our children from nature-deficit Disorder*. Chapel Hill, NC: Algonquin Books of Chapel Hill.
- Louv, R. (2008). *Last child in the woods: Saving our children from nature deficit disorder*. (2nd ed.). Chapel Hill, NC: Algonquin Books of Chapel Hill.
- Maas, J. (2009). Morbidity is related to a green living environment. *Journal of Epidemiology & Public Health*, 63(12), 967-973. Retrieved July 22, 2010 from <http://jech.bmj.com/content/60/7/587.full>
- McConnell, V. & Walls, M. (2005). *The value of open space: Evidence from studies of nonmarket benefits*. Resources for the Future. Washington: DC. Retrieved September 21st, 2010 from <http://www.rff.org/RFF/Documents/RFF-REPORT-Open%20Spaces.pdf>
- McKenzie-Mohr, D. & Smith, W. (1999). *Fostering sustainable behavior: An introduction to community-based social marketing*. Canada: New Society Publishers.
- Mercogliano, C. (2007). *In defense of childhood: Protecting kid's inner wildness*. Boston, MA: Beacon Press.
- Nabhan, G. P., & Trimble, S. (1994). *The geography of childhood: Why children need wild places*. Boston, MA: Beacon Press.
- National Wildlife Federation. (2008, May). *Connecting today's kids with nature: A policy action plan*. Reston, VA: White, H.
- National Wildlife Federation. (2010). *Be Out There Campaign*. Retrieved April 18, 2020 from <http://www.nwf.org/Get-Outside/Be-Out-There.aspx>.
- National Wildlife Federation (2010). *Whole child: Developing mind, body and spirit*



- through outdoor play*. Retrieved July 30, 2010 from http://www.nwf.org/Get-Outside/Be-Out-There/Why-Be-Out-There/Special-Reports/~media/PDFs/Be%20Out%20There/BeOutThere_WholeChild_V2.ashx
- No Child Left Inside (NCLI) (2010). Retrieved July 9th from www.nochildleftinside.org/
- Pain, R. (2006). Paranoid parenting: Rematerializing risk and fear for children. *Social and Cultural Geography*, 7, 221-243. Retrieved July 12, 2010 from EBSCO host.
- Pergams, O.R.W, & Zaradic P.A. (2008). Evidence for a fundamental and pervasive shift away from nature-based recreation. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, 105(2), 2295-2300. Retrieved June 1, 2010 from www.pnas.org/cgi/doi/10.1073/pnas.0709893105
- Roszak, T., Gomes, M.E. & Kanner, A.D. (Eds) (1995). *Ecopsychology: Restoring the Earth, healing the mind* (pp. 240-259). San Francisco, CA: Sierra Club Books.
- Sebba, R. (1991). The landscapes of childhood: The reflections of childhood's Environment in adult memories and in children's attitudes. *Environment and Behavior*, 23: 395-422. Abstract only.
- Sherer, P. (2006). *The benefits of parks: Why America needs more city parks and open space*. San Francisco, CA: The Trust for Public Land.
- Sobel, D. (1996). *Beyond ecophobia: Reclaiming the heart in nature education*. Great Barrington, MA: The Orion Society and the Myrin Institute.
- Stafford, T. et al. (2009). *Parents' perceived benefits and fears about experiences in Nature for children*. Colorado State University
Manuscript submitted for publication.



State of Colorado (2010). Colorado Kids Outdoor Bill of Rights. Retrieved January 25, 2010 from

<http://www.colorado.gov/cs/Satellite?blobcol=urldata&blobheader=application%2Fpdf&blobheadertype=Content-Disposition&blobheadertype2=MDT-Type&blobheadertype3=inline%3B+filename%3D456%2F71%2FCO-BOR-designbyPete.pdf&blobheadertype4=abinary%3B+charset%3DUTF-8&blobkey=id&blobtable=MungoBlobs&blobwhere=1239166185840&ssbinary=true>

State of Colorado (2010). *A report on Lt. Governor Barbara O'Brien's Colorado Kids Outdoors Initiative*. Retrieved January 25, 2010 from

http://www.colorado.gov/cs/Satellite?blobcol=urldata&blobheader=application%2Fpdf&blobheadertype=Content-Disposition&blobheadertype2=MDT-Type&blobheadertype3=inline%3B+filename%3D870%2F791%2FLtGov%27s_CKO_Initiative_Report.pdf&blobheadertype4=abinary%3B+charset%3DUTF-8&blobkey=id&blobtable=MungoBlobs&blobwhere=1251606171383&ssbinary=true

State of Colorado (2010). A toolkit for communities, families & youth. Retrieved April, 2010 from

http://www.colorado.gov/cs/Satellite?blobcol=urldata&blobheader=application%2Fpdf&blobheadertype=Content-Disposition&blobheadertype2=MDT-Type&blobheadertype3=inline%3B+filename%3D225%2F869%2FFINAL_CKO_Toolkit.pdf&blobheadertype4=abinary%3B+charset%3DUTF-8&blobkey=id&blobtable=MungoBlobs&blobwhere=1251621100700&ssbinary=true



- Stevenson, J. (2009). The best cities to raise an outdoor kid. *Backpacker*, 37(269), 80-82.
- Theobald, D.M., Wilcox, G., & Whisman, J. (2007). *Inventory of Open Space in Colorado: Status and trends of protected lands in 2007*. Retrieved September 21, 2010 from:
http://www.nrel.colostate.edu/projects/comap/download_documents/2007_Inventory_of_Open_Space_Report.pdf
- U.S. Census Bureau (2010). Boulder County 2006-2008 Fact Sheet. Retrieved November 1, 2010 from <http://factfinder.census.gov>
- Valentine, G. & McKendrick, J. (1997). Children's outdoor play: Exploring parental concerns about children's safety and the changing nature of childhood. *Geoforum*, 28(2), 219-235. Retrieved July 12, 2010 from ScienceDirect.
- Vaske, J. J., and Donnelly, M. P. (2008). Estimating visitor use Boulder Open Space and Mountain Parks. (HDNRU Report No.80). Report for Boulder Open Space and Mountain Parks. Fort Collins: Colorado State University, Human Dimensions in Natural Resources Unit.
- Veitch, J., Bagley, S., Ball, K., & Salmon, J. (2006). Where do children usually play? A qualitative study of parents' perceptions of influences on children's active free play." *Health & Place*, 12(4), 383-393.
- Wells, N.M., and Evans, G.W. (2003). Nearby Nature: A Buffer of Life Stress Among Rural Children. *Environment and Behavior*, 35(3), 311-330. Retrieved July 13, 2008 from Sage Premier 2010.
- Wildland Awareness and Educational Institute (WAEI) (2009). Discover what's waiting In the great outdoors! As cited in State of Colorado (2010). *A report on Lt. Governor Barbara O'Brien's Colorado Kids Outdoors Initiative*. Retrieved



January 25, 2010 from

http://www.colorado.gov/cs/Satellite?blobcol=urldata&blobheader=application%2Fpdf&blobheadername1=Content-Disposition&blobheadername2=MDT-Type&blobheadervalue1=inline%3B+filename%3D870%2F791%2FLtGov%27s_CKO_Initiative_Report.pdf&blobheadervalue2=abinary%3B+charset%3DUTF-8&blobkey=id&blobtable=MungoBlobs&blobwhere=1251606171383&ssbinary=true

World Forum – Nature Action Collaborative for Children (2008). Call to action: Re-connecting the world’s children to nature. Retrieved June, 1 2010 from <http://mail.ccie.com/go/eed/2779>.



Appendix A

Ideas to Get Families Outdoors

Workshops for Parents: skills based, and ideas to get kids in nature
Family Nature Clubs
Natural Leaders Network for Youth
Play Safe Zones in Parks and Neighborhoods
Unstructured Play areas at Nature Centers
Last Child in the Woods Book Studies/Clubs for Parents
Partnerships with Health Care Professionals
DeHaunting Wild Things Events around Halloween
Let Technology be Your Friend - Post Online Scavenger Hunts, Bingo, Geocaching etc)
Bring Awareness to “Nearby Nature”
Nature Discovery Packs (back packs filled with field guides, binoculars, etc for checkout)
Monthly Free Hikes for Families
Pledges
Nature Tweets on Twitter
Meadow Music sing-a-longs
Organize Family Hikey Hikes to stress the importance of Physical Fitness
Nature-themed Playgrounds
Volunteer Opportunities for the Whole Family to encourage action and stewardship
Community gardens & Schoolyard Habitats
Family Nature Nights
Photo Contests for kids/families sponsored by your agency
Nature Detectives Kids Club– Boulder County Parks and Open Space
Kids Summer Camps – Thorne Ecological
Celebrate Nationally recognized events such as:

- *National Kids to Parks Day* 5/21
- *National Trails Day* 6/5
- *National Get Outdoors Day* 6/12
- *Great American Backyard Campout* 6/26

Advertising Methods

Agency Website
Facebook
Twitter
YouTube
Listservs
E-newsletters
Print newsletters
Public Radio Spots
School PTA
Doctor’s Offices
Parents’s groups
Mom’s groups
Religious groups
Word of mouth



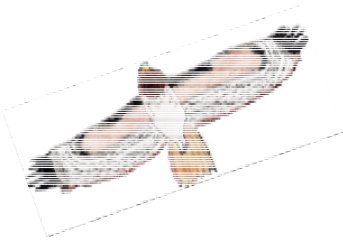
Neighborhood Home Owner's Associations (HOA's)
Local Businesses



Appendix B

Sample Resource Sheet for Parents/Caregivers





Connection to Nature Resources

Websites & Resources

Acorn Naturalists – online nature books and resources www.acornnaturalists.com
Children & Nature Network (C&NN) <http://www.childrenandnature.org/>
Colorado Alliance for Environmental Education (CAEE) <http://www.caee.org/>
Colorado Division of Wildlife <http://wildlife.state.co.us/>
National Wildlife Federation <http://www.nwf.org/>
No Child Left Inside Coalition www.NCLICoalition.org
Project Learning Tree <http://www.plt.org/>
Project WET <http://www.projectwet.org/>
Project Wild <http://www.projectwild.org/>

Activity & Theory Books

Cornell, J. (1998). *Sharing nature with children: The classic parents' and teachers' nature awareness guide book*. Nevada City, CA: Dawn Publications.
Christopher, T. (2010). *The green hour: A healthy dose of nature for happier, healthier, smarter kids*. Boston, MA: Trumpeter Books.
Louv, R. (2008). *Last child in the woods*. (Rev. ed.). Chapel Hill, NC: Algonquin Books of Chapel Hill.
Project Wild (2010). *Growing up wild: Exploring nature with young children*.
Young, J., Haas, E., & McGown, E. (2010). *Coyote's guide to connecting with nature*. Shelton, WA: OwlLink Media Corporation

Studies/Reports

Burdette, H. L., & Whitaker, R.C. (2005). Resurrecting free play in young children: Looking beyond fitness and fatness to attention, affiliation and affect. *Archives of Pediatrics & Adolescent Medicine*, 159, 46-50.
Chawla, L. (2006). Learning to love the natural world enough to protect it. *Barn nr.*, 55 78.
C&NN. (2008). *C&NN Community Action Guide: Building the Children & Nature Movement from the Ground Up*. Retrieved April 1, 2008, from <http://www.cnaturenet.org/uploads/CNActGuide1.1.pdf>
C&NN. (2008). *Children and Nature 2008: A Report on the Movement to Reconnect Children to the Natural World*. Retrieved April 1, 2008, from <http://www.cnaturenet.org/uploads/CNMovement.pdf>
Clements, R. (2004). An investigation of the status of outdoor play. *Contemporary Issues in Early Childhood*, 5 (1), 68-80.
National Wildlife Federation. (2008, May). *Connecting today's kids with nature: A policy action plan*. Reston, VA: White, H.
Taylor, A. F., Kuo, F. E., & Sullivan, W.C. (2001). Coping with ADD: The surprising connection to green play settings. *Environment and Behavior*, 33 (1), 54-77.





Easy Activities to Get Kids Out in Nature

Color Hunt – use paint chips from local paint stores and have children find their color in nature. Create pallets of colors for spring, summer, fall, and winter.

Camera Game – have your family members pair up. Designate one person as the photographer and one as the camera. Have the camera person close their eyes. The photographer then gently spins the camera person around and will then take the camera to an object that he/she would like the camera to have a mental image of. The photographer taps the child on the shoulder to indicate it is time to open their eyes (like a camera shutter) and then taps again to have him/her close their eyes. The camera person can be spun again and then can open their eyes to try to find the object that they took the mental picture of. Then, the participants change roles and go again.

Micro Investigation – use string, or a hula hoop to designate a spot on the ground, in the air, or on a tree to explore and examine. You can use magnifying glasses, bug boxes, rulers, etc to aid with this activity. Have family members try to find as many interesting things as they can!

Interview with Nature – create some questions you would like to ponder in nature, then interview a tree, animal, rock etc to figure out how it got there and what its life is like.

Nature Journaling – grab some scrap paper and let your creativity flow. Create poems, drawings or reflective writing in and about nature.

Scavenger Hunts – create scavenger hunts or bingo games to help with exploration. E.g.: Find an insect, listen for a bird, examine a flower, etc.

Sensory Exploration – focus on listening, sight, or touch while outdoors for a day.

I spy – play I spy while hiking. For example “I spy something yellow.” I spy a cloud in the shape of a fish,” I spy a rock that is shaped like a heart.”

Letter Game – identify something that begins with the letter A, B, C, D...(apple, butterfly, caterpillar, dog etc).

Sound stop – try to identify as many sounds as you can while either hiking or stopping.

Name Creation – Come up with names for flowers and plants along the hike, eg: “sticky plant” or “fuzzy flower.”

Outdoor Story Time – read a book under the shade of a tree.

