

California Children in Nature: A Campaign for Action



An Initiative of
California State Parks





“All California children will be inspired to actively and creatively engage with and appreciate the natural environment.”

www.parks.ca.gov/cinc



The Issue: What's it all about?

Today's children are much less connected to the natural world than at any other time in history, a phenomenon referred to as '*nature-deficit disorder*.'

There are multiple reasons for the disconnection, with consequences we are just starting to understand.



The Changing Landscapes of Childhood

Children's lives have changed considerably over the
past half-century,
especially how they spend their time and
where they spend it.

There are complex reasons for the shift in
childhood activities



Greater interaction with technology



Growing Urbanization



More time spent in structured outdoor play



Parental fear of the known and unknown



Consequences of the Disconnection from Nature

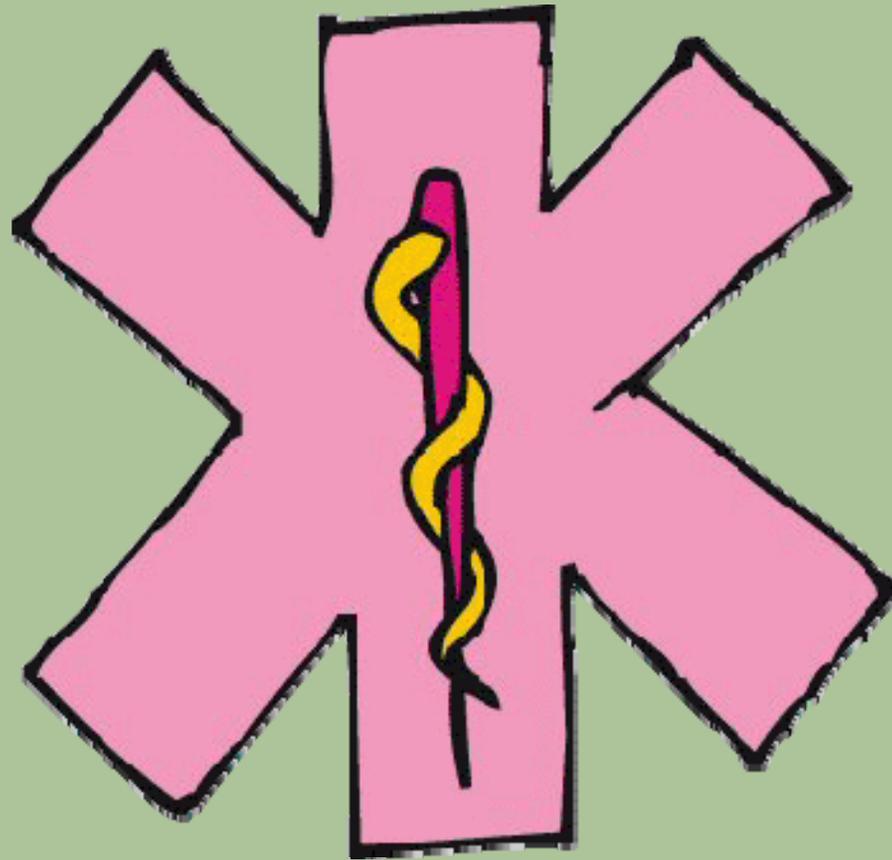
Emerging research indicates many possible negative outcomes for children.



**Increased
rates of
childhood
obesity
and Type-
II
Diabetes**



Increased occurrence of Type-II diabetes even in young children



Psychological Stress



Lack of opportunities for children to engage in creative, unstructured play

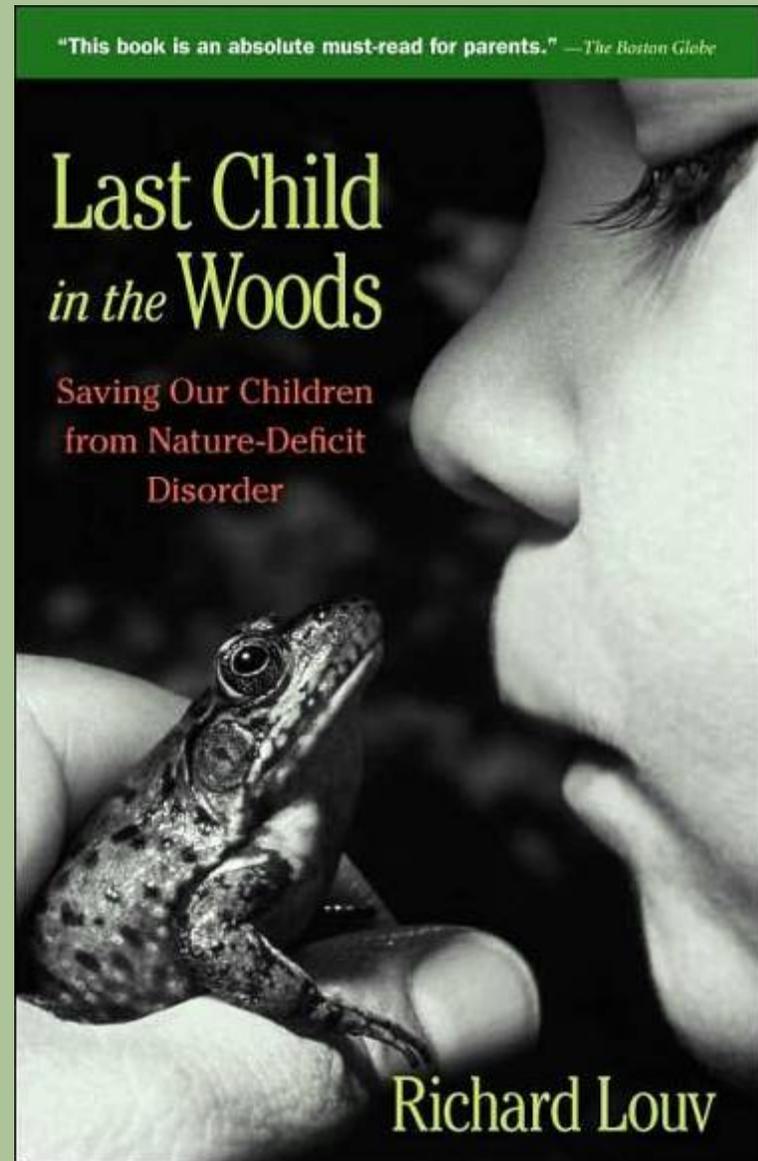


Waning connection to the natural world



“healing the broken bond between our young and nature is in our self-interest...”

Richard Louv, 2006



Benefits of Connecting with Nature

As with the negative outcomes of the nature disconnection, researchers in many disciplines are just beginning to quantify the benefits of the human-nature connection.



Physical well-being



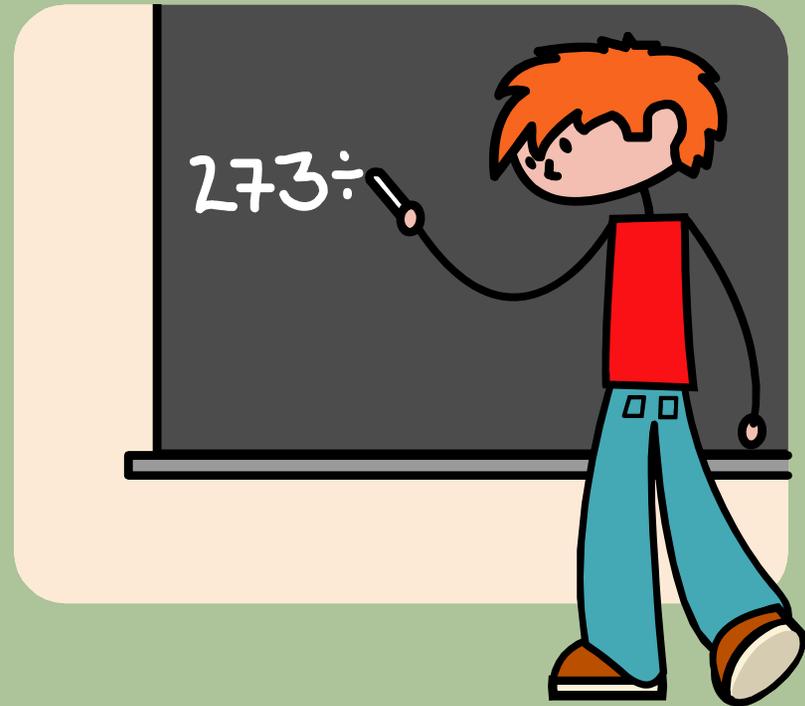
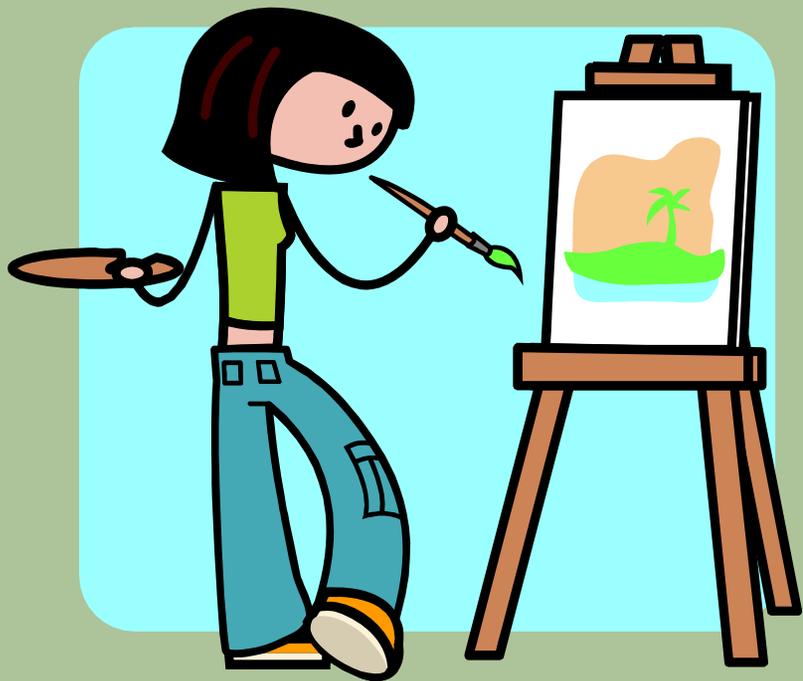
A healthier and happier well-balanced child



The development of intra- and interpersonal skills



Increased cognitive functioning



**An increased
sense of
connection to the
natural world
around them**



A sense of caring and stewardship for the natural



A National Movement...

“The movement to reconnect children to the natural world has arisen quickly, spontaneously, and across the usual social, political, and economic dividing lines.”

— *ORION magazine, March/April 2007*



**"This Season's Hot New Toy:
Fresh Air"**

National Post – December 19, 2007

"Free-Range Kids"

The Christian Science Monitor May 22, 2008

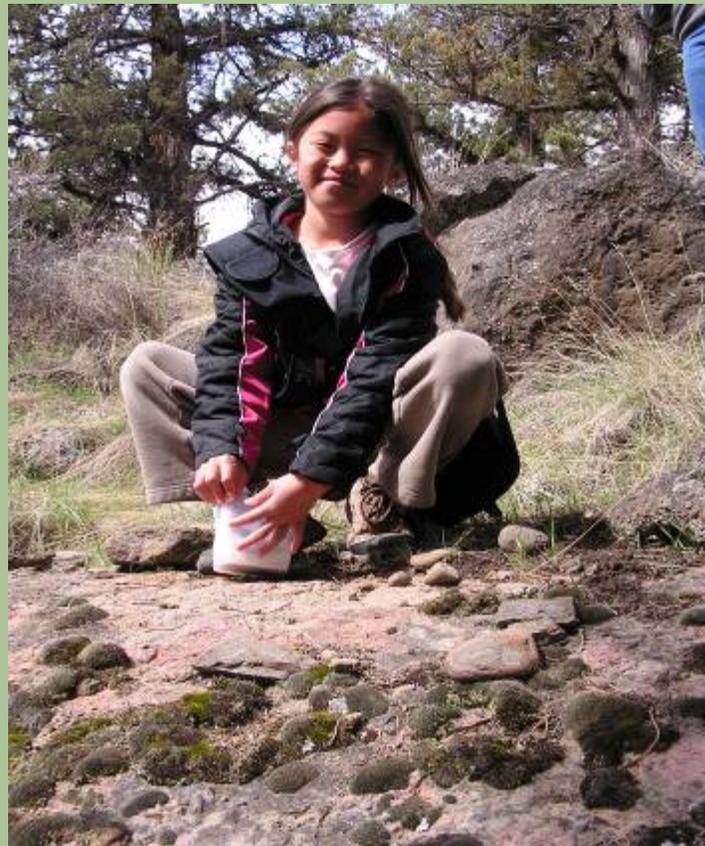
**"NPR: The Importance of
Old-Fashioned Play"**

National Public Radio February 21, 2008



Children in Nature Campaign

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California State Parks

Our Mission

To provide for the health, inspiration and education of the people of California by helping to preserve the state's extraordinary biological diversity, protecting its most valued natural and cultural resources, and creating opportunities for high-quality outdoor recreation.



www.parks.ca.gov

In pursuit of this goal, the Campaign for Action will:

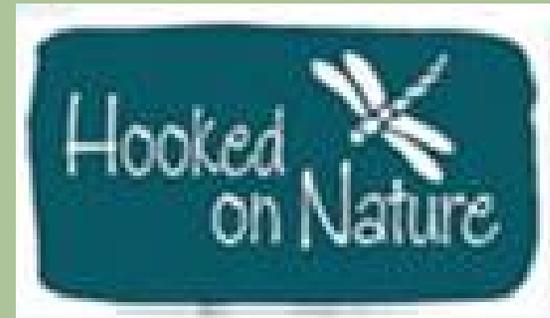
- Promote existing 'children-in-nature' programs
- Promote the California Children's Outdoor Bill of Rights
- Facilitate collaborations among committed entities
- Create a speakers bureau to raise awareness
- Host media events
- Develop a California Children in Nature web site to provide research and other tools.



Promote California State Parks Programs



Promote other existing 'children-in-nature' programs



California
Children's



OutdoorTM
Bill of Rights

Promote the
California
Children's
Outdoor
Bill of Rights



What is the California Children's Outdoor Bill of Rights?

Every child should have the opportunity to:

1. Discover California's past
2. Splash in the water
3. Play in a safe place
4. Camp under the stars
5. Explore nature
6. Learn to swim
7. Play on a team
8. Follow a trail
9. Catch a fish
10. Celebrate their heritage



Facilitate collaborations among private, public, and non-profit sectors committed to the children-in-nature cause



Create a speakers bureau to raise awareness of the cause



Host a series of media events around the state



Develop a California Children in Nature website



- Campaign related activities
- Helpful resources
- Relevant links
- Success stories

www.parks.ca.gov/cinc



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How can you get involved?



www.parks.ca.gov/cinc

