



# The connection between childhood nature deficit and air quality protection in the U.S.

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# America's New Indoor Childhood

- American kids no longer play together outdoors
- Instead they spend 6.3 hours per day staring at electronic screens
- Not including homework!



# A Profound Change

- Estimates are that children spend 10X the amount of time watching screens indoors than playing outdoors
- Loss of social and interpersonal skills



# Weekly Outdoor Time?

- Unstructured outdoor play?
  - 30 to 50 minutes per week
- Add in organized sports?
  - 4 hours per week
- Compare indoor “screen” time
  - 44 hours week

# Health Professionals:

- CDC says kids missing about 60 minutes per day of light to moderate activity
- AAP says kids need an hour per day of unstructured play
- Affects attention spans and creativity



# The Missing Foundation of Fitness

- Early onset of diabetes
- Cardio-pulmonary problems
- Poorer overall state of health
- Shorter life-spans – 3 to 5 years



# Indoor Childhood:

The enemy of preventative  
health care on a vast  
societal scale

# Disproportionate Impacts

- Access to organized activities
- Parent's sense of safety
- Reliance on public programs
- Air pollution and other exposures



# National Wildlife Federation

- **Be Out There!** – public education campaign
- **Green Hour** – parent support program
- **Research** – Eg. Learning “readiness”
- **Nature-find** – opportunity locator
- **Policy agenda** – federal and state
- **Agency, NGO and corporate partnerships**

# EPA's Commitment to Children's Health

- Toxic exposures
- Air quality
- Water quality
- Home, school and play



# Indoor Air Quality

- Modified definition of the “ambient environment”
- Homes
- Schools
- Daycare



Getty Images

# Outdoor Air Quality

- New challenge to air safety messaging
- Alerts
- Positive aspects of fresh air



# Solutions: Kids Outdoors

- Goal: daily green hour
- Barriers
- Safe: Opportunities
  - Backyards
  - Camps
  - Daycare
  - School
  - Playspaces



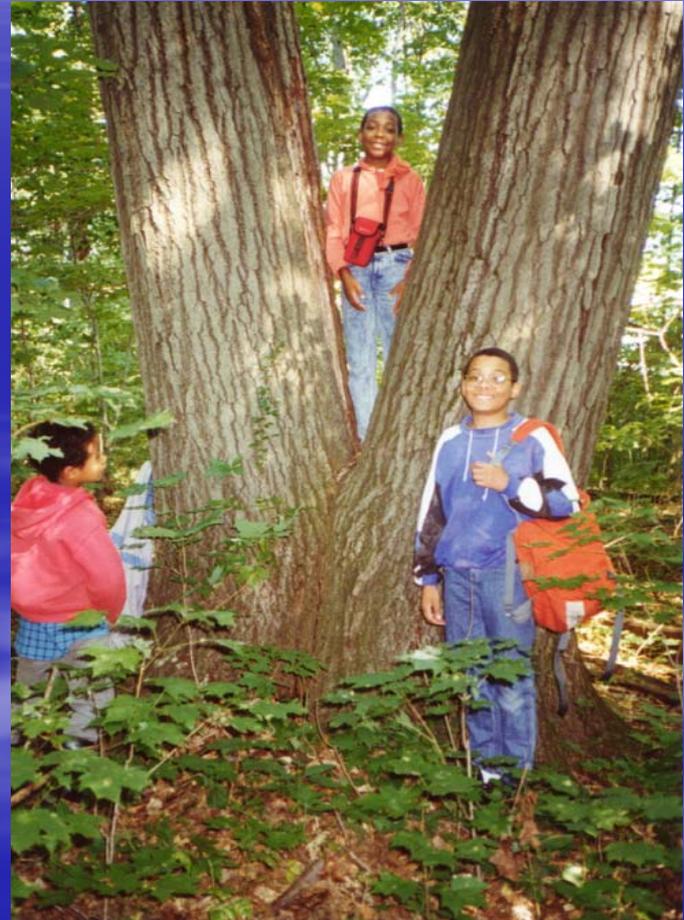
# Policy Agenda -- Examples

- State NCLI plans to coordinate
  - Parks and recreation
  - Public health
  - Environmental quality
  - Education(NWF policy guide)
- School wellness plans



# EPA Air Quality and Children's Health Protection Education

- Expanded indoor air education tools
- Outdoor air quality indexes
- Nexus of clean air and natural play spaces
- Informational support of state NCLI plans



# EPA Air Quality and Children's Health Protection Policy

- Proposed federal legislation for children and outdoors state plans
- Reinforcement of safe AQ for schools & daycare
- School anti-idling
- Other --



# Thanks

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