

# Connecting to Nature Through Education

Reducing the  
Nature Deficit in Our  
Children:



‘No Child Left Inside’  
Initiative

# What is Nature Deficit Disorder?

“Nature deficit disorder describes the human costs of alienation from nature, among them: diminished use of the senses, attention difficulties, and higher rates of physical and emotional illness. This disorder can be detected in individuals, families, and communities ... This term is by no means a medical diagnosis, but it does offer a way to think about the problem and possibilities - for children, and the rest of us as well.”

- Richard Louv

# What is the Issue?

- Children have abandoned traditional methods of free, outdoor play that bonded them to nature and have adopted a sedentary lifestyle set in the realms of technology and cyberspace.
- The Department of Education is responsible for educating and fostering healthy growth and development in students.





- CCNB believes that New Brunswick schools should offer an environment where nature is used as an educational resource: a pathway to learning for children.

# Why Does This Matter?

Young people are suffering from a loss of primary experience.  
“Dual sensory” or secondary experiences are how youth experience our world today.

*Primary Experiences* can be seen, felt, tasted, heard or smelled.

*Secondary Experiences* are only two dimensional (vision and sound).

# Benefits of Reconnecting Children to Nature

- Education
- General Health
- Mental Health
- More Creative Play
- Motor Coordination
- Self Esteem
- Concentration and Impulse Control
- Decrease in Aggression
- Develop a Relationship with Nature: stewardship and responsibility



# Risks of Not Connecting Children to Nature:

- Increase in Agitation
- Increase in Aggression/Bullying
- Decrease in Relationships
- Increase in Mental Health Problems
- Low Self Esteem
- Develop Super Child Syndrome
- Increase in Fear
- Suffer from Nature Deficit Disorder
- Increase in Hyper Awareness as opposed to Hyper Vigilance



# Issues with the Great Indoors:

- Increase in Pollution
- High Allergen Levels
- Spread of Infectious Diseases and Germs
- Development of Childhood Obesity
- Decrease in Physical Activity
- Develop Heart and Regulation Problems
- Dissociated from Nature
- Develop Ecophobia
- Lack of Knowledge of one's own Natural Environment





# Today's Classroom:

- Test Based
- Benefits only a few learning styles
- Industrialized
- Devoid of Nature
- Based on Silicon Faith
- Part of the Problem



# Educators need to:

- Provide Unstructured Play Time
- Encourage Students to Play Outside
- Encourage Students to Keep a Nature Journal
- Teach Environment Based Education
- Teach Experiential Education



# Benefits of Incorporating Nature:

- Improves Standardized Test Scores
- Improves Grade Point Averages
- Improves Decision Making Skills
- Improves Problem solving Skills
- Improves Critical Thinking Skills
- Decreases Disciplinary Referrals



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