

Children & Nature Network

# CHAMPIONING PARK EQUITY

Equitable Access to Parks

## ABOUT THE CHILDREN & NATURE NETWORK



**Nature has the power to make children healthier, happier and smarter.**

***There is a quiet crisis facing children around the world.***

Over the last few generations, childhood has moved indoors, leaving kids disconnected from the natural world. This worldwide trend has profound implications for children's healthy development—and the future of our planet.

**Today's kids spend up to:**

**90%** *of their time indoors*

**50 hours/week**

*in front of a screen*





# Review of the Policy Landscape COVID-19 Context

- Increased Childhood Obesity Rates and Diabetes
- Increased Social Isolation
- Decreased Social Cohesion
- Increase Interest in Park Utilization
- Implicit or Implied “Locals Only” Parks Policy
- Vacant or Underutilized Schoolyards

# Policy Opportunities Park Equity beyond Park RX

- Green Schoolyards
- Safe Routes to Parks



# green schoolyards

**ACTION AGENDA**

*Increasing equitable access to nature's  
benefits in schoolyards across the U.S.*

## our vision

**All U.S. communities offer access to green schoolyards  
by 2050 to enhance children's healthy development,  
community wellbeing and positive environmental impacts.**

# The state of schoolyards today. One word: Asphalt.



- Not enough play area to engage all children during recess & PE
- Not designed for hands-on learning outdoors
- Does not excite, motivate kids to want to come to school
- Lack of green space= increased temps outside & higher cooling costs inside the school
- Asphalt replacement and repair costs
- Increased costs for snow plowing
- Increased flooding & inability to use the space for periods of time

# The potential of green schoolyards



- Ample play area to engage more children during recess and PE for increased physical activity
- Outdoor classrooms areas for hands on learning; helping meet Environmental Literacy Plan goals
- Reduction in stress levels and increase in mental health
- Increase in academic performance
- Increase in enrollment
- Increased student attention and attendance
- Increase in family and community engagement
- Lower energy costs for cooling the building
- Reduction in schoolyard and localized flooding
- Schoolyard is available for use throughout the year and in different weather conditions



## What is a Green Schoolyard?

A green schoolyard is a nature-filled, multi-functional school ground designed for and by students, teachers, parents and community members that offer spaces to play, learn, explore and grow. During out-of-school time, green schoolyards are ideally open for community use, increasing access to nearby parks and improving the health and wellbeing of surrounding communities.

They can include:

- outdoor classrooms
- native and pollinator gardens
- stormwater capture
- traditional play equipment
- nature play areas
- edible gardens
- trails
- trees, etc.

Process map for building successful--and sustainable--green schoolyards programs

## GETTING STARTED

- ▶ MAKE THE CASE
- ▶ SECURE FUNDING
- ▶ IDENTIFY POLICIES
- ▶ BUILD PARTNERSHIPS



## MOVING FORWARD

- ▶ DESIGN THE SCHOOLYARD
- ▶ ACTIVATE FOR LEARNING
- ▶ USE IN OUT-OF-SCHOOL TIME

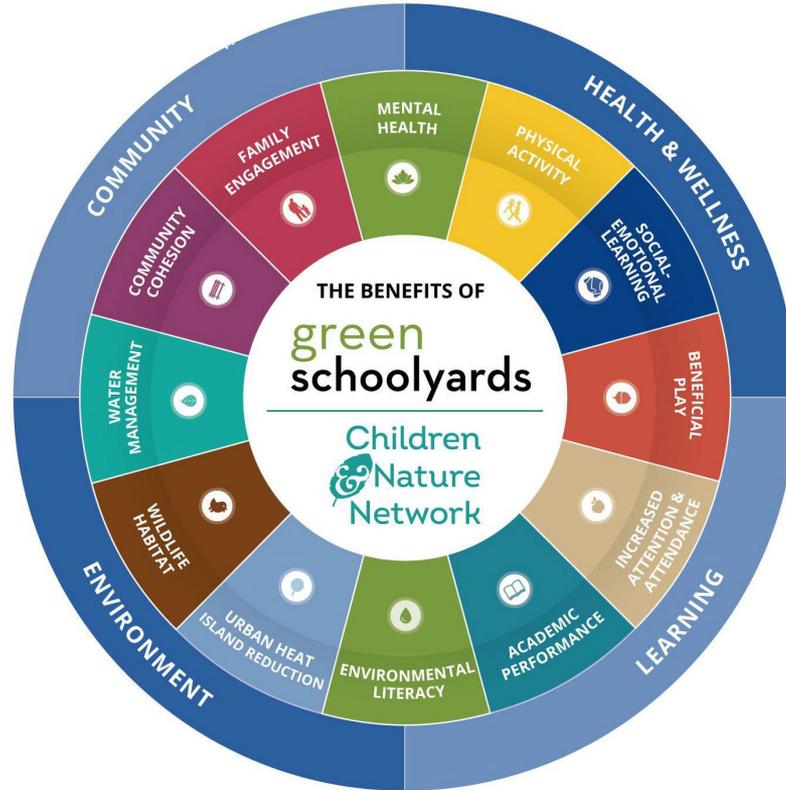


## SUSTAINING IMPACT

- ▶ MANAGE THE SPACE
- ▶ EVALUATE THE IMPACT



# Benefits of Green Schoolyards



# Using green schoolyards as outdoor classrooms



With a few tools and some training, there is no limit to what can be taught outside...

Science

Math

Literature

Writing

Social  
Studies

Art

Music

History

# How C&NN is supporting the scaling of green schoolyards

## Advocacy Toolkit

### Toolkit Contents

GREEN SCHOOLYARDS FOR BETTER HEALTH AND LEARNING SLIDE DECK

BENEFITS OF GREEN SCHOOLYARDS HANDOUT

GREEN SCHOOLYARDS PROCESS HANDOUT

INFOGRAPHICS

COMMUNITY NEEDS ASSESSMENT

CASE STUDIES

TOOLKIT OVERVIEW

## IMPLEMENTING GREEN STORMWATER INFRASTRUCTURE ON SCHOOLYARDS

A report commissioned by

 the green infrastructure leadership exchange

The Exchange is a project of the Global Philanthropy Partnership.



## GREEN SCHOOLYARDS EVALUATION FRAMEWORK

Considerations for Measuring the Many Benefits

children & nature NETWORK

green schoolyards FOR HEALTHY COMMUNITIES



We create students who:

- are excited by and engaged in DOING science
- have an enduring bond with the natural world



# San Francisco Green Schoolyards

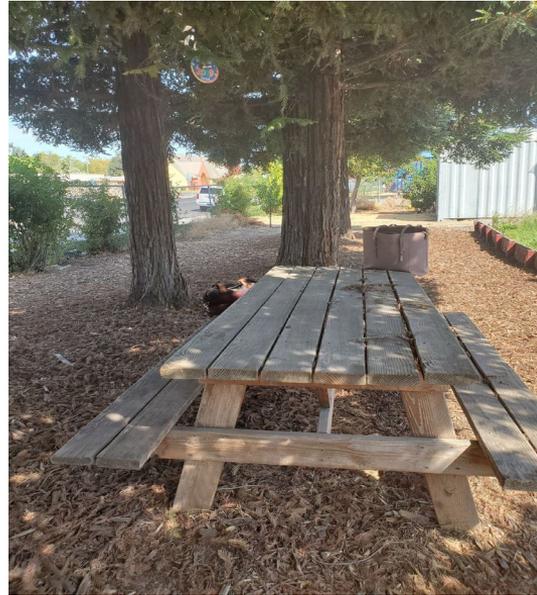
- Led by the School District
- Housed in the District's Office of Sustainability
- Green Schoolyards Manager



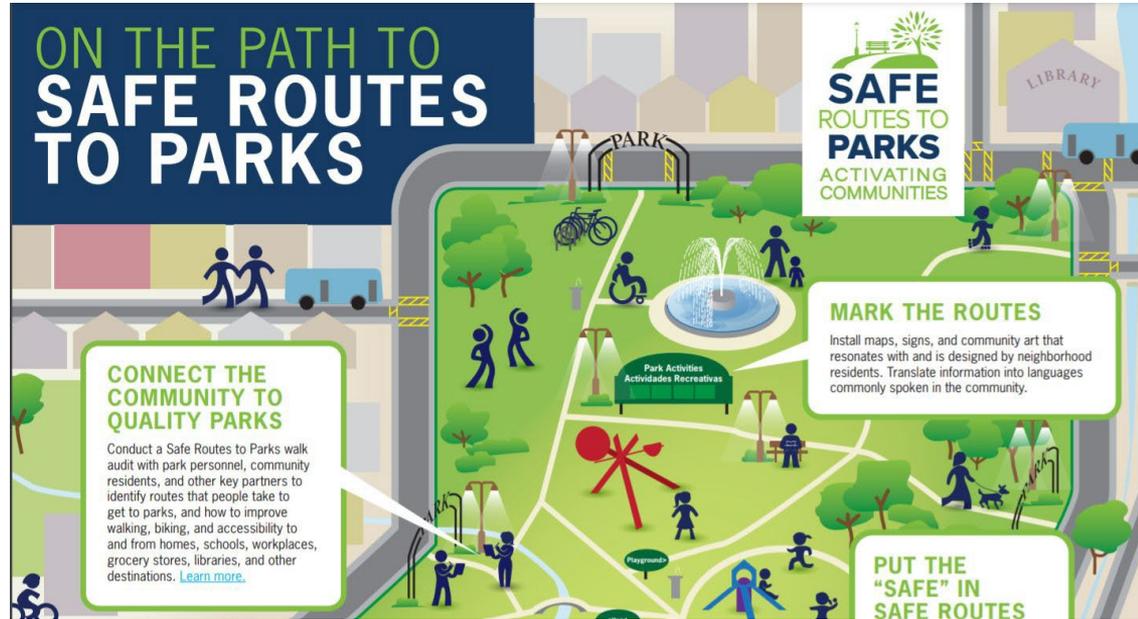
# Living Schoolyards for Oakland



# Green Schoolyards in the Central Valley



# Safe Routes to Parks





# Key Components of Safe Routes to Parks

- Engage
- Assess
- Plan
- Implement
- Sustain

# Safe Routes to Parks Case Study Planada, CA

- Underutilized Park
  - Vandalism
  - Crime
  - No Restrooms



# Houlihan Park

- Community Engagement
- Partnership Development: Cultiva Salud
- Planning Grant to Support Community Priorities
- Received a large state grant



# What Role Can Providers' Play?

- Attend Coalition Meetings
  - Elevate the Provider's perspective
- Convene Partners
- Tap into Existing Resources to Engage Key Stakeholders





# Call to Action

- Write an Op-Ed and submit to your local newspaper
- Lift up park access and park equity with your colleagues



**Mikaela Randolph,**  
**Technical Assistance Consultant**  
Children & Nature Network  
[mikaela@childrenandnature.org](mailto:mikaela@childrenandnature.org)