

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



OUR THEORY OF CHANGE



To increase equitable access to nature, we need to influence the big systems that impact children's lives: **city** policies and programs; **schools** and early childhood programs; **family** access to safe, nearby green spaces and outdoor experiences; and **youth** development programs to inspire a new generation of diverse, nature-smart leaders. To drive systems-level change, we will:

- **FOSTER THE BELIEF** that nature connection is critical for children's healthy development, using evidence-based tools and research
- **CHANGE THE CORE SYSTEMS** that impact children's daily lives through place-based strategies, policies and partnerships
- **GROW THE MOVEMENT** and our collective impact by providing cross sector leaders with tools, resources, technical assistance, training, and opportunities for peer learning.

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

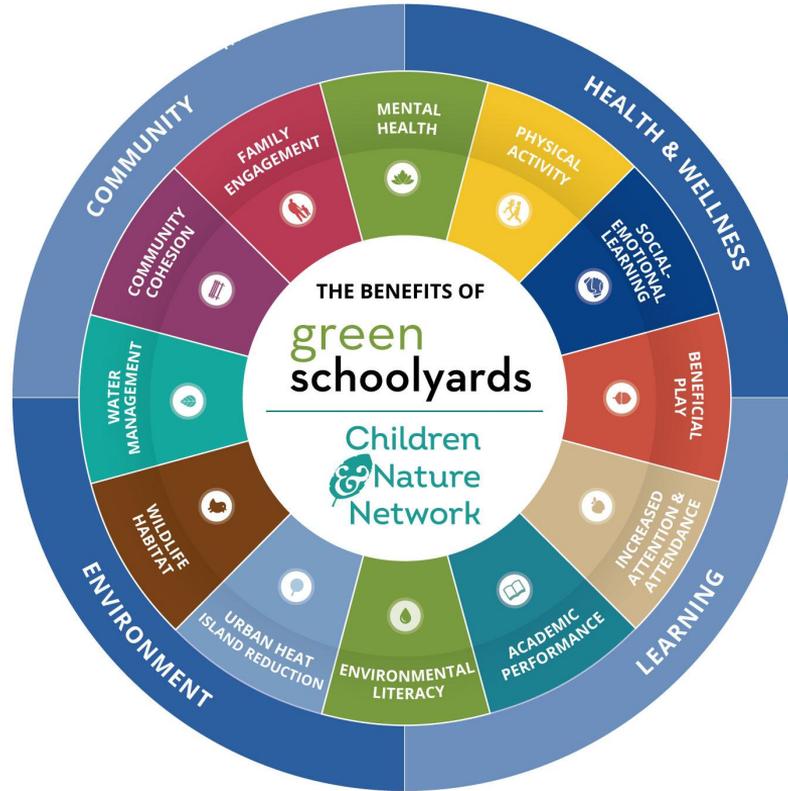


SUSTAINING IMPACT

- ▶ 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

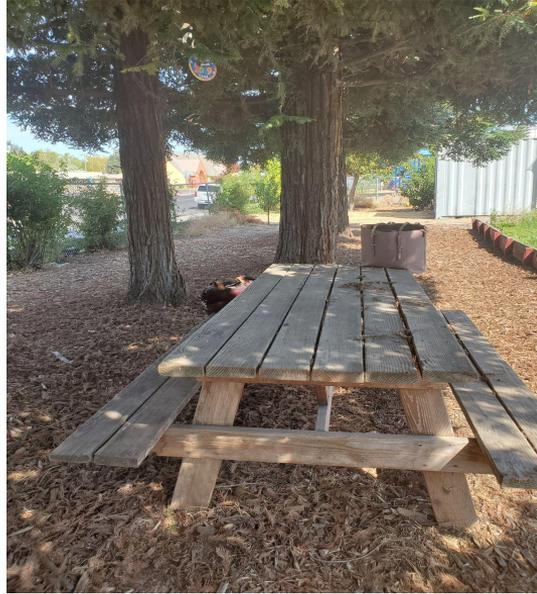
- Led by the School District
- Housed in the District's Office of Sustainability
- Green Schoolyards Manager



Living Schoolyards for Oakland



Green Schoolyards in the Central Valley



Safe Routes to Parks

ON THE PATH TO SAFE ROUTES TO PARKS

SAFE ROUTES TO PARKS
ACTIVATING COMMUNITIES

CONNECT THE COMMUNITY TO QUALITY PARKS
Conduct a Safe Routes to Parks walk audit with park personnel, community residents, and other key partners to identify routes that people take to get to parks, and how to improve walking, biking, and accessibility to and from homes, schools, workplaces, grocery stores, libraries, and other destinations. [Learn more.](#)

MARK THE ROUTES
Install maps, signs, and community art that resonates with and is designed by neighborhood residents. Translate information into languages commonly spoken in the community.

PUT THE "SAFE" IN SAFE ROUTES

Park Activities
Actividades Recreativas

Playground

LIBRARY



Key Components of Safe Routes to Parks

- Engage
- Assess
- Plan
- Implement
- Sustain

Sale 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



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