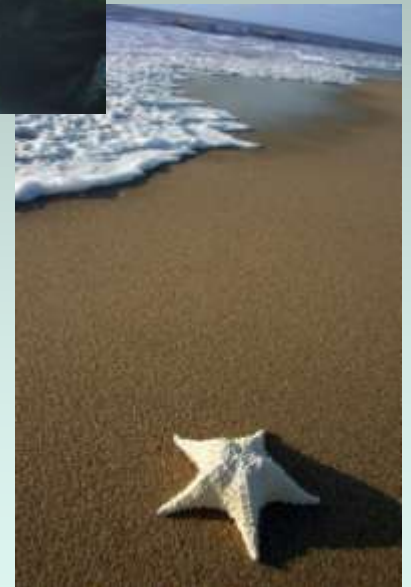


The Importance of Nature for Children



Children and Nature Connection –
Northern Colorado
2009

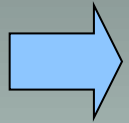
Your Special Nature Place



Do the children in your life have
a special nature place?

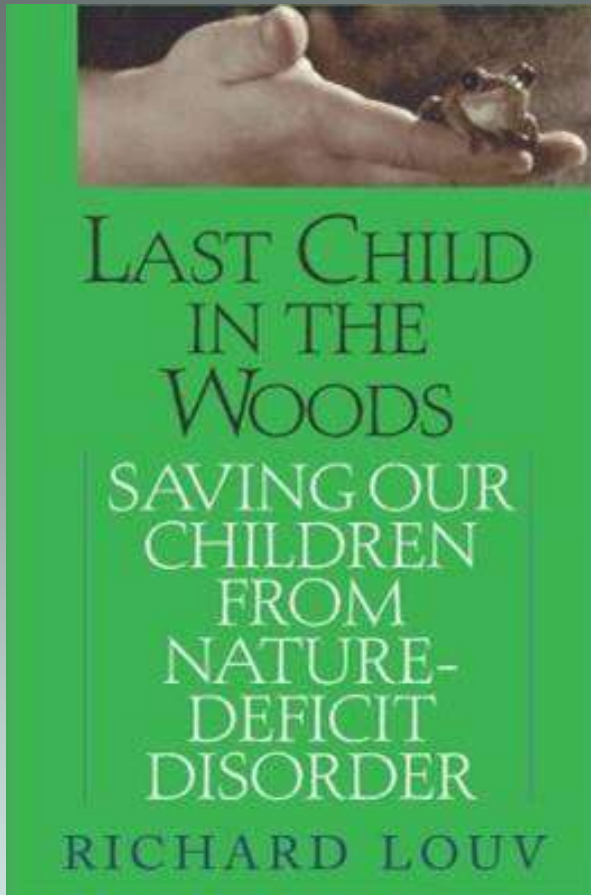


Children and Nature at a Crossroads

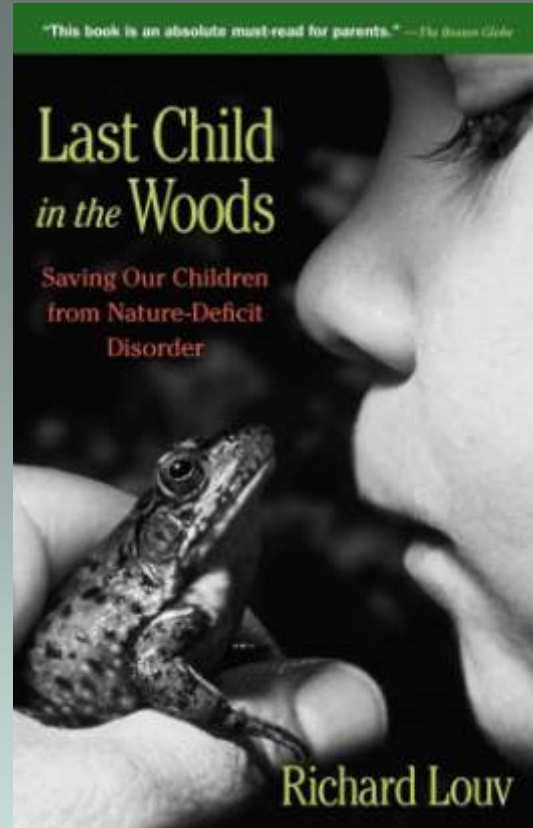


- What is nature-deficit disorder?
- Why is it a concern?
- Envisioning change

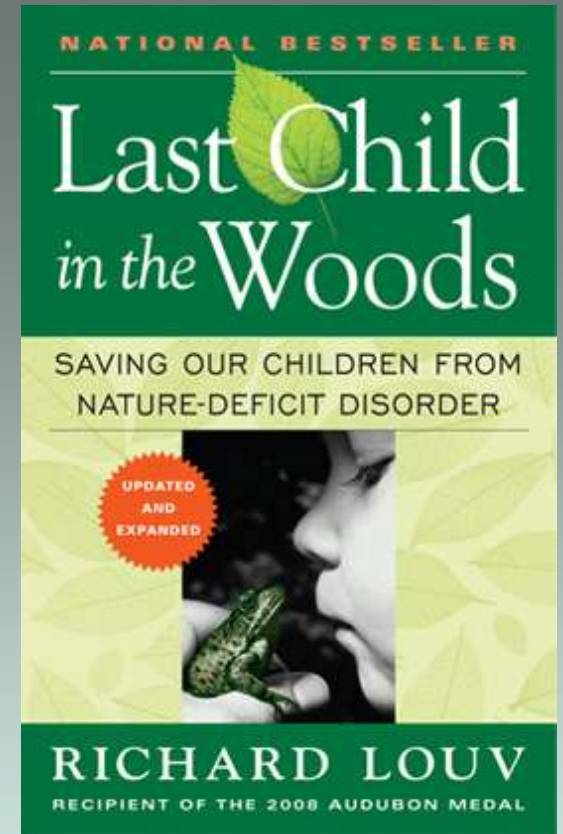




2005 hardback



2006 paperback



2008 revised paperback

Nature-Deficit Disorder

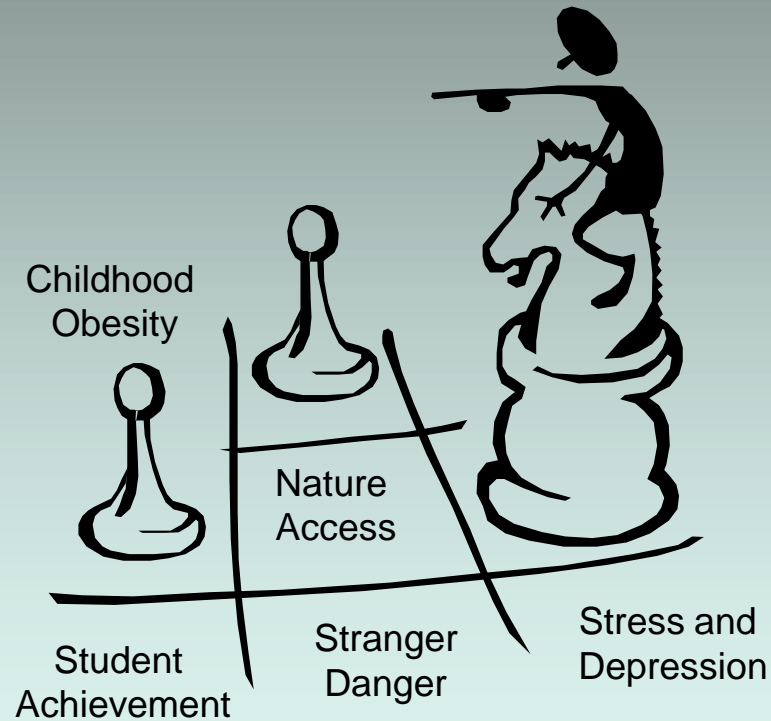


Describes...

- the growing disconnect between children and nature that has potential negative impacts on a child's physical, emotional, and mental development.
- the cumulative effect of withdrawing nature from children's experiences.

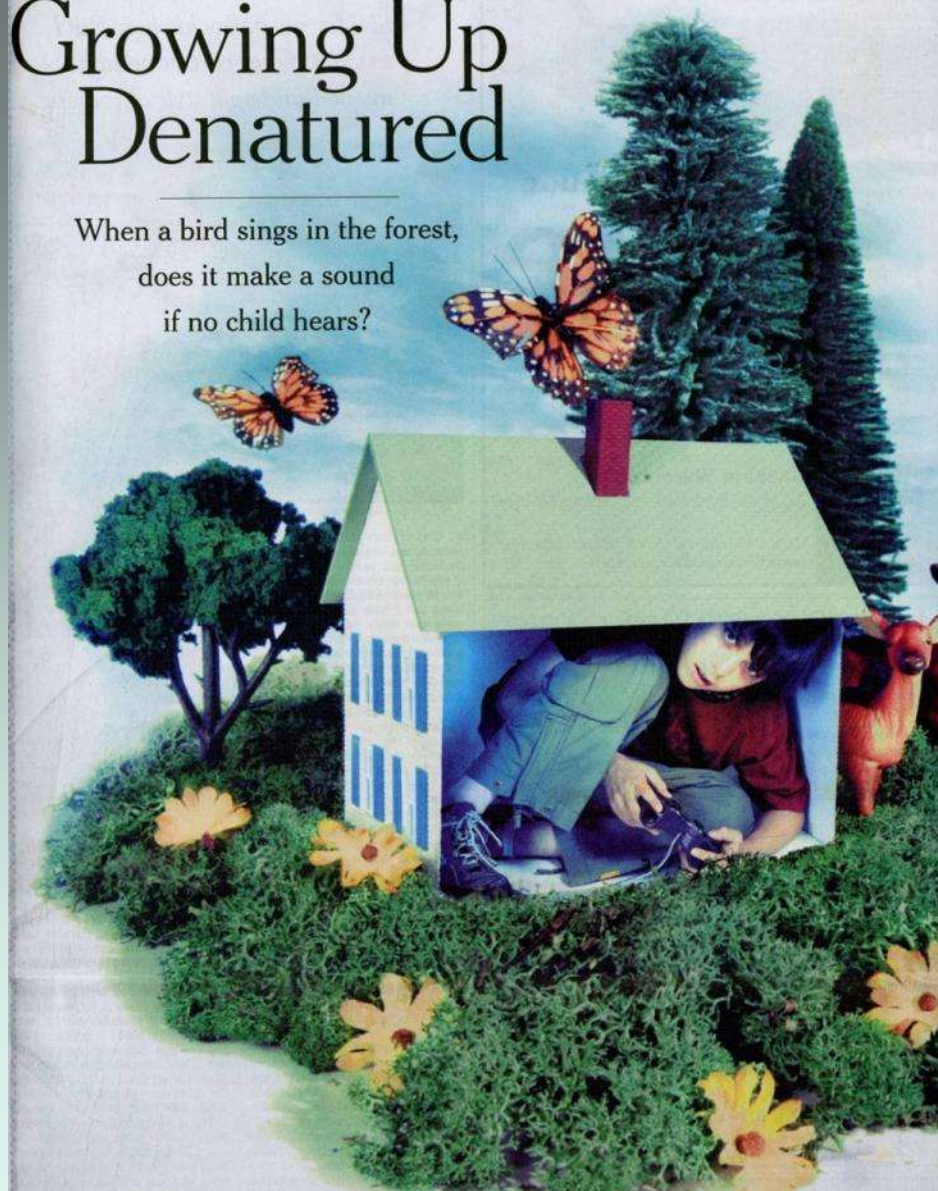
(Richard Louv, 2005)

A Perfect Storm: Indicators of Nature Deficit Disorder



Growing Up Denatured

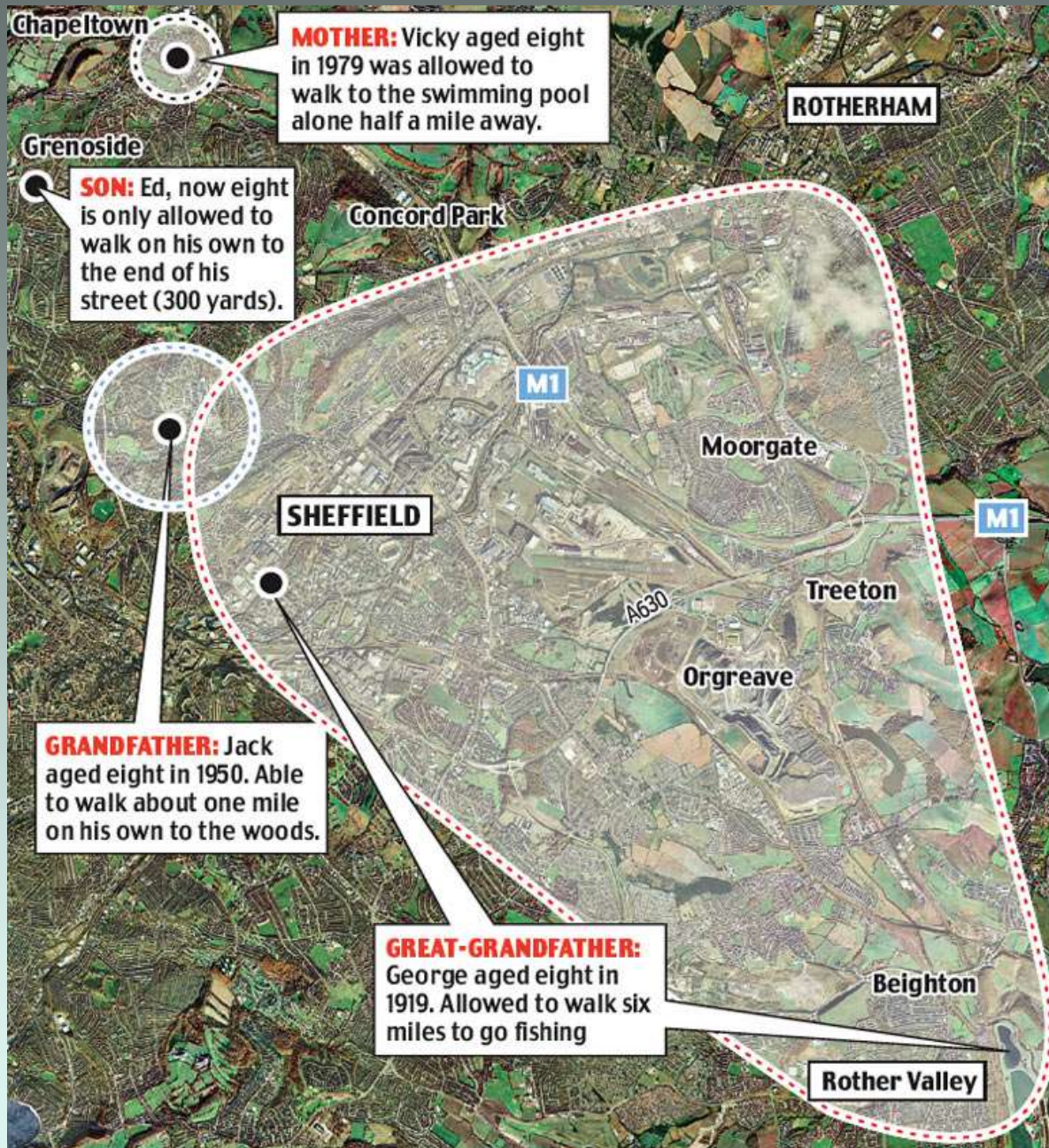
When a bird sings in the forest,
does it make a sound
if no child hears?



*“I like to play indoors
better 'cause that's
where all the electrical
outlets are.”*

fourth grader

NYT article – April 28, 2005



**How Children Lost
the Right to Roam
in Four Generations**
By David Derbyshire
June 15, 2007

“Using the real world is the only way learning happened for 99.9% of human existence. Only in the last 100 years have we put it in a little box called a classroom.”

~ Marcella Wells



...kids can tell you lots about the Amazon rain forest but can they tell you how it felt the last time they laid out in the woods and watched the leaves move or the clouds roll by?



Are children's
imaginative worlds
shrinking?

Children and Nature at a Crossroads

- What is nature-deficit disorder?
- ➔ ■ Why is it a concern?
- Envisioning change



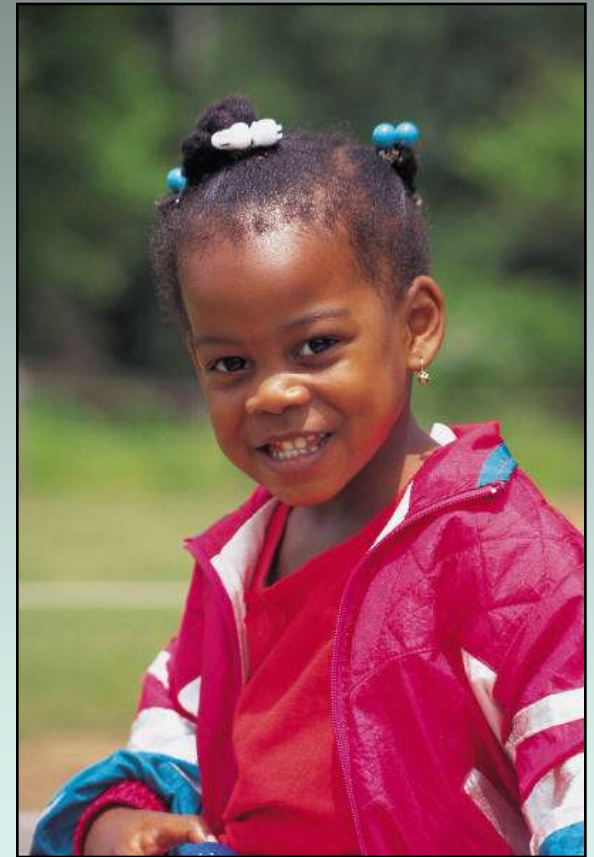
Bad News!

- Over 9 million American children (ages 6-19) are overweight – triple the number in 1980 (2004).
- Rates of children with Type II diabetes have been steadily increasing (CDC, 006).
- Only 13% of children walk or ride bikes to school (66% in 1974) (2002)



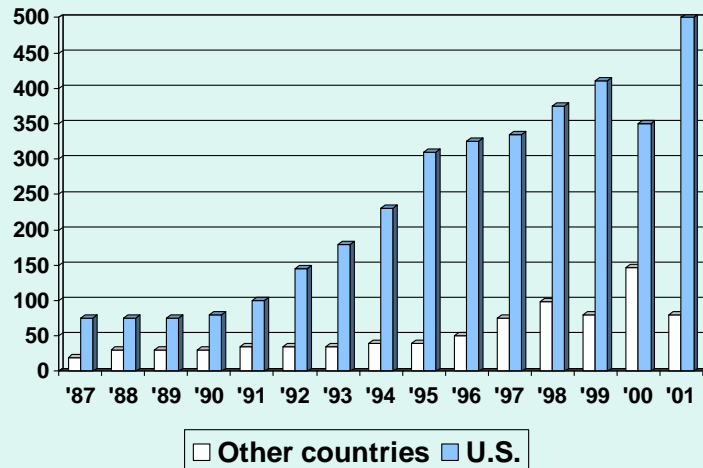
Good News!

- Children who experience diverse natural settings are more physically active, more aware of nutrition, more civil to one another... (*Bell and Dymont, 2006*)
- Playtime, especially unstructured, imaginative, exploratory play, is an essential component of (healthy) child development (*Burette and Whitaker, 2005; Ginsburg et al., 2007*)
- Nature play aids in weight control, physical fitness, and general good health.



Bad News!

Methylphenidate (Ritalin)
Consumption, United States and
Elsewhere: 1987 - 2001



Centers for Disease Control and Prevention,
2000

- Today, ADD and ADHD are a serious public health problems.
- Diagnosis of ADHD skyrocketed 33% between 1997 and 2002.
- Spending on ADHD drugs (e.g. Ritalin) rose 369% between 2000 and 2003 (children under age 5) (2004).

The Good News!

- Contact with nature can significantly reduce symptoms of ADD (*Kuo and Taylor, 2004*)
- The greener a child's everyday environment, the more manageable their ADD symptoms. (*Taylor, Kuo and Sullivan, 2001*)
- ADHD symptoms decrease with engagement in nature. (*American Journal of Public Health, 2004*)



Bad News!



- 1 - 2 million children and teens in the U.S. are on antidepressants (USA Today, 2004).
- Childhood depression affects 2.5% of children. (NIMH, 1999)
- Anti-depressant use increases by almost 10% annually in children and adolescents. (Psychiatric Services, 2004)

The Good News!

- The more nature a child encounters, the less s/he is affected by negative stresses. *(Cornell University, 2003)*
- Access to green spaces for play enhance peace, self-control, and self-discipline. *(Taylor, Kuo and Sullivan, 2001)*
- Green plants and vistas reduce stress among highly stressed children *(Wells and Evans, 2003)*



Bad News!

- In 2005, only 29% of 4th and 8th graders and 18% of 12th graders were at or above proficient in **science achievement**.
- **Reading proficiency** of 4th graders has remained steady since 2002, while that of 8th graders has decreased.
- U.S. performance in **math literacy** and problem solving was lower than average performance for most OECD countries.



The Good News!



Nature-Smart kids get higher test scores (*American Institute for Research, 2005*)

The benefits of using the environment as an integrating concept include:

- Higher scores on standardized tests
- Reduced discipline issues
- Increased engagement in and enthusiasm for learning
- Greater pride and ownership in accomplishments. (www.seer.org)

Benefits of Nature Play

- ***Physical*** – physical fitness, weight control, reduced injury
- ***Intellectual*** – problem solving, focus, creativity, imagination
- ***Emotional*** – happiness, wonder
- ***Social*** – cooperation, flexibility, teamwork
- ***Spiritual*** – sense of place, sense of belonging, humility



(Kellert, 2005; Driver, Brown, Peterson, 1991)

The Fear Barrier

- 94% of parents say that safety is their biggest concern when deciding about whether to let their children play outdoors. (*Bagley, Gall and Salmon, 2006*)
- 82% of mothers with children between 3-12 years cited crime and safety concerns as one of the primary reasons they do not allow their children to play outdoors (*Clements, 2004*)



Don't be afraid!



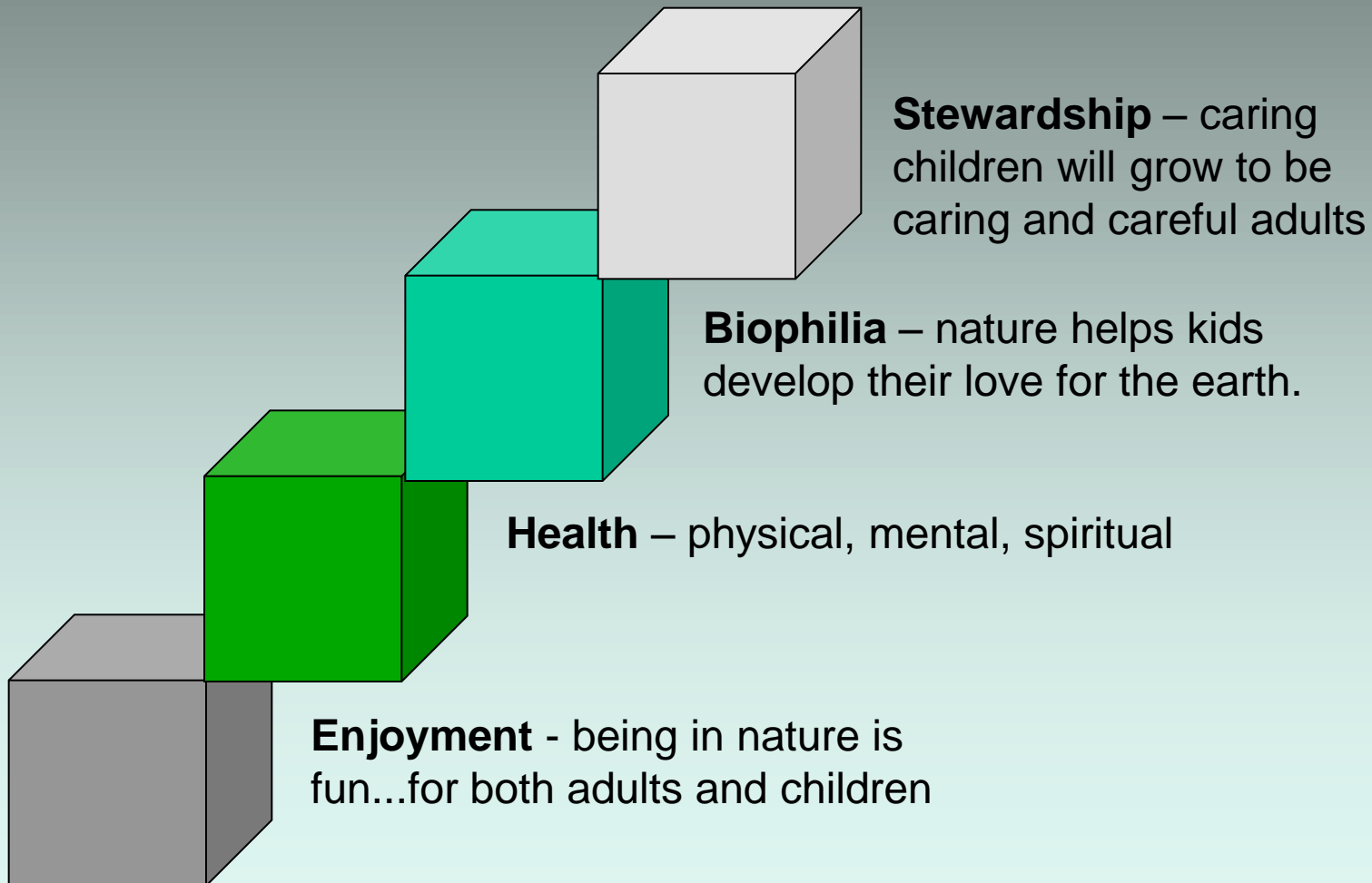
- American kids are safer now than they have been in any time since 1975. (*Duke University, 2005*)
- Participating agencies fighting sex crimes against children tripled in 2 years (*Crimes Against Children Task Force, 2006*)
- Crimes against children are frequently prolonged and/or intensified by the media (*Louv, 2005*)

Perspective

The most disturbing finding of the **2007 *Child and Well-Being Index*** is not violence or abductions, but the fact that children's health has sunk to its lowest point in the 30-year history of the Index.

Foundation for Child Development, Child Well-Being Index (CWI) - 2007

Cumulative Benefits of Connecting Kids and Nature

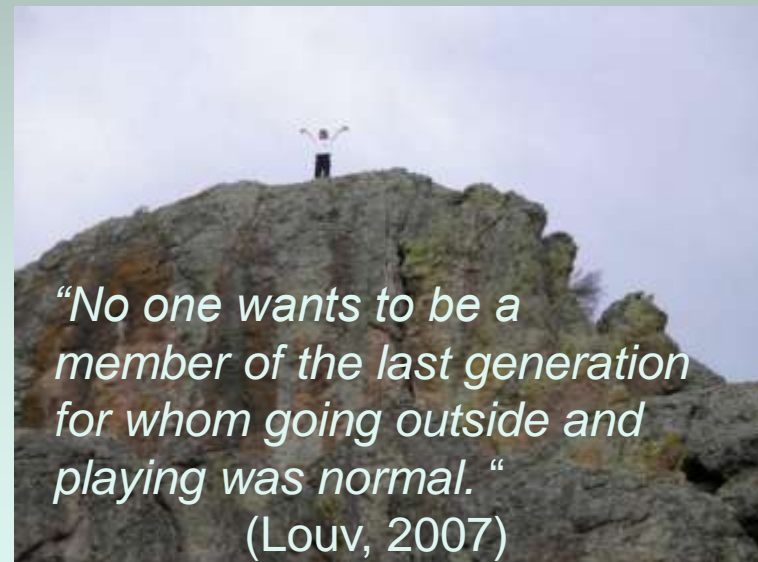


Children and Nature at a Crossroads

- What is nature-deficit disorder?
- Why is it a concern?
- ➔ ■ Envisioning change



No Child Left Indoors

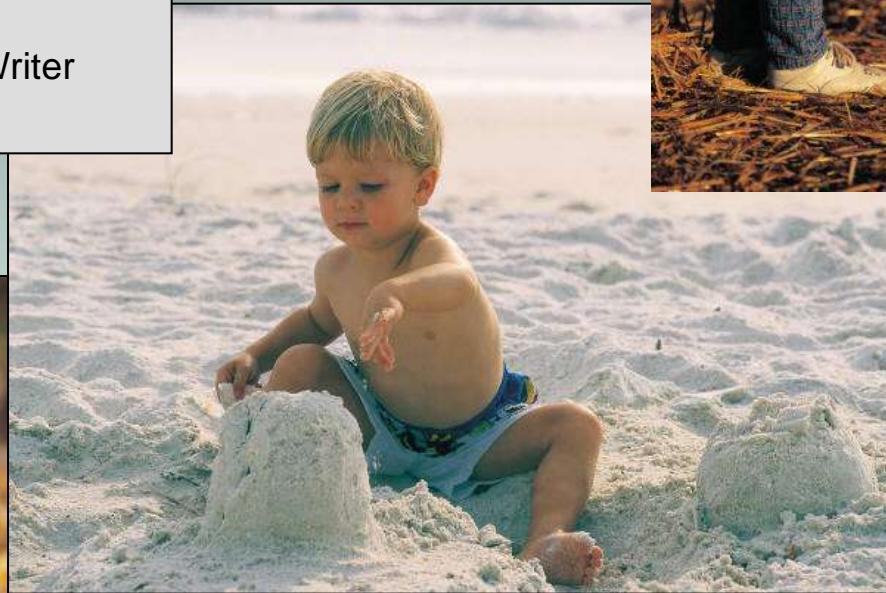
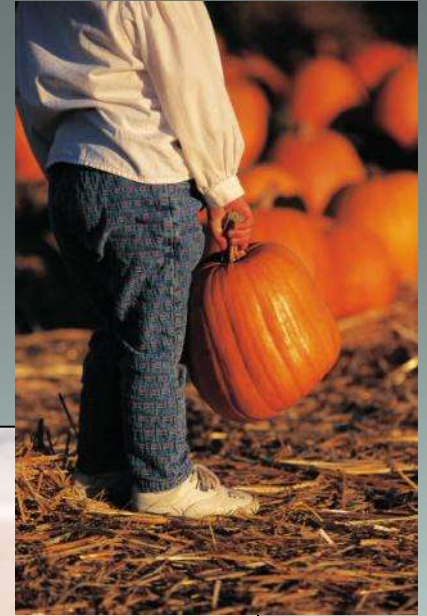


“No one wants to be a member of the last generation for whom going outside and playing was normal.”

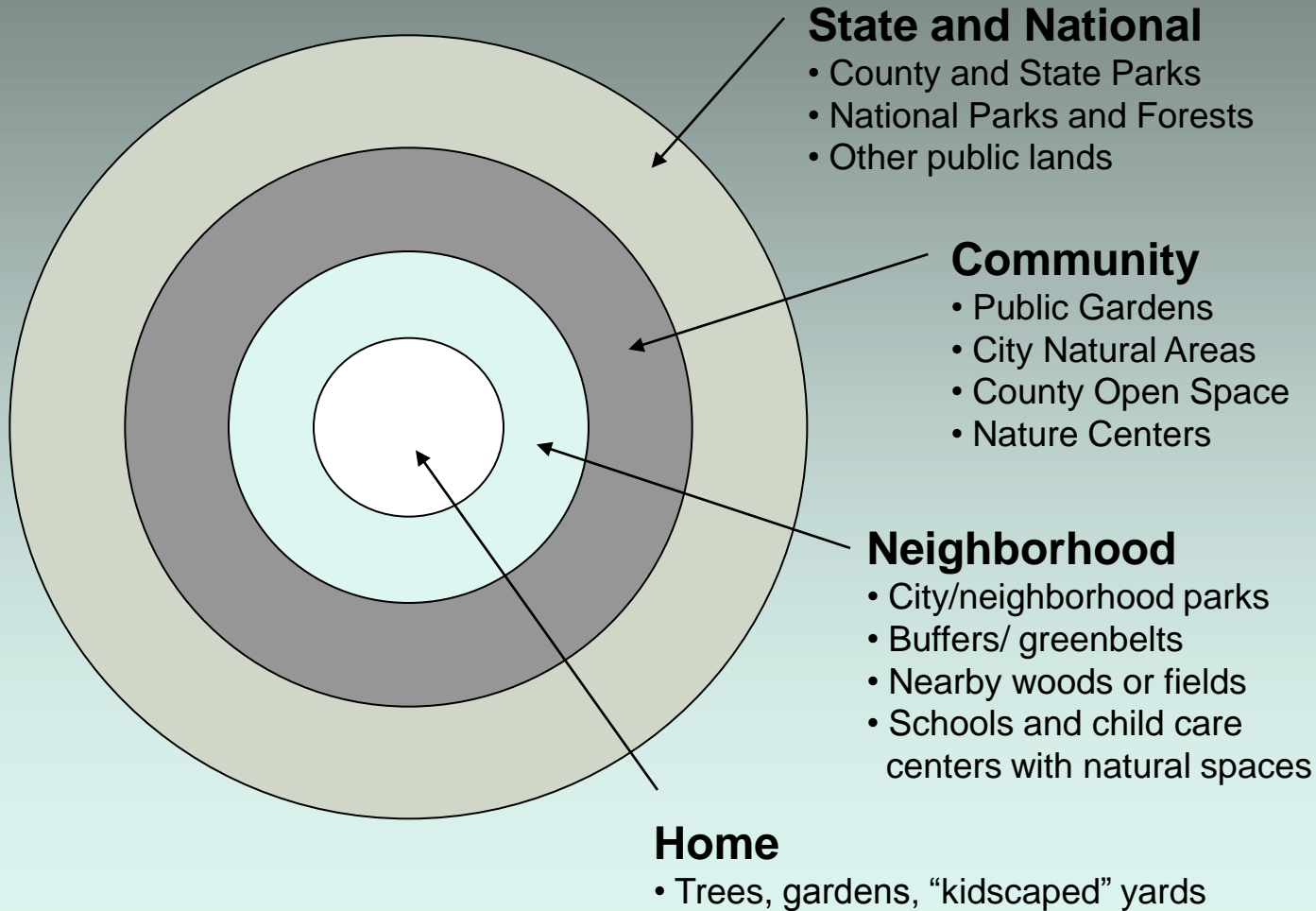
(Louv, 2007)

Turn them loose in the country...bathe the spirit in natural influences...It is time enough to answer children's questions when they are interested enough to ask them.

John Burroughs, Nature Writer
1837-1921



Solutions at Every Level



Initiatives Nationwide



Building a Movement to Reconnect Children and Nature

[RSS FEED >>](#) [ARCHIVE](#) | [ABOUT C&NN](#) | [WHO WE ARE](#) | [NEWSLETTER SIGN-UP >>](#)

[About Us](#) | [News](#) | [Research, Resources & Publications](#) | [The Movement](#) | [Get Involved](#)

[Grassroots](#) | [Nature Clubs](#) | [Programs & Events](#) | [Awareness Month](#) | [Natural Leaders Network](#) | [Nature Rocks](#) | [MAP](#)

Show: campaigns programs & events nature clubs awareness month 2009

Map | Satellite | Hybrid | Terrain



Some locations have multiple events and programs. Click on (📍) to zoom in to see more detail.

Connect with us:

- Follow us on Twitter
- Become a fan
- Read our blog

We're mapping the Children & Nature movement.



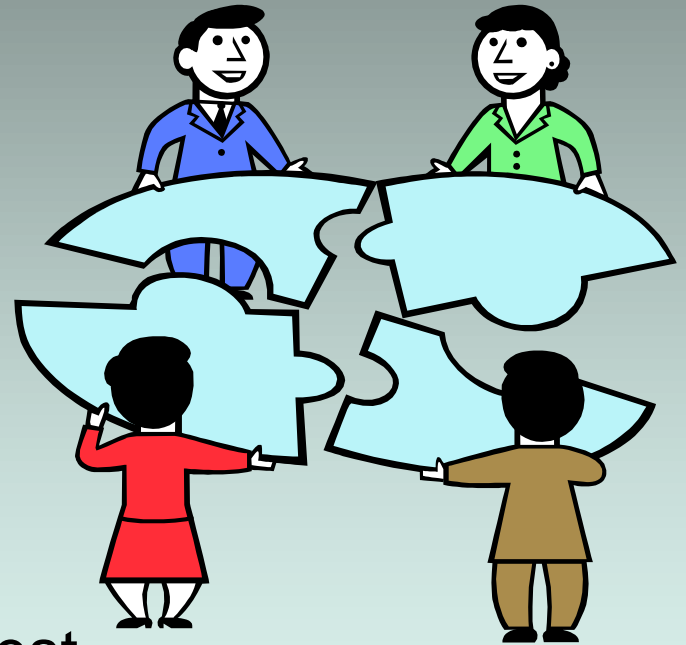
[+] Get on the map. Add your campaign, club, program, or event.

NOW in SPANISH - Nature Clubs for Families Tool Kit



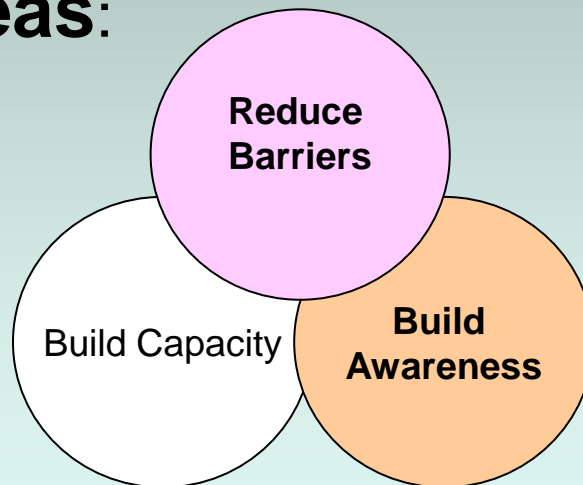
Local Collaborators

- City of Fort Collins
- Larimer County
- Colorado Division of Wildlife
- CSU - Environmental Learning Center
- Colorado State Parks
- EDUCO Fort Collins
- Poudre School District
- Arapaho-Roosevelt National Forest
- Wells Resources, Inc.



Children and Nature Connection Northern Colorado

- **Vision:** A community that develops and promotes meaningful relationships between children and nature.
- **Mission:** We advocate for unstructured time outdoors as a means to reconnect children to nature.
- **Focus Areas:**



Envisioning Change

- At home – as a parent
- At school – as a teacher
- As a good neighbor
- As a citizen
- **As an organization focusing on improving the health and well-being of youth in Larimer County**



What we have to offer...

- Presentations, book studies, help with classes
- Display and staffing for events
- Marketing materials and website in development
- Networking
- Research on barriers and strategies to overcome them

What do you need?

Exposure to nature

- helps kids stay physically healthy
- helps kids stay mentally healthy
- helps kids perform better in school
- is safe
- is fun!

*“Together we
laughed for pure
joy.”*

Rachel Carson
1907-1964
Scientist, Writer



Do the children you know have a special nature place?

“Go out into nature and meet yourself.”

Enos Mills, 1870-1922
Conservationist and Writer



Thank you!



Questions or comments?