

GREEN SCHOOLYARDS ENCOURAGE BENEFICIAL PLAY



THE ISSUE

8-18 year olds in the U.S. spend an average of 7.5 hrs per day using entertainment media.¹

KIDS NEED TO PLAY: PLAY SUPPORTS PHYSICAL, SOCIAL & EMOTIONAL WELL-BEING.

Natural areas promote child-directed free play that is imaginative, constructive, sensory rich and cooperative.

ENCOURAGING IMAGINATIVE, COOPERATIVE FREE PLAY



GREEN SCHOOLYARDS CAN:

Accommodate different ages & abilities ^{2,3}

Sustain children's interest ^{4,5}

Offer a variety of options that appeal to a wide range of play interests ²

Promote cooperation & negotiation ^{4,6}

Strengthen links between play & learning ^{2,3,4}

GREEN SCHOOLYARDS CAN SUPPORT DIFFERENT TYPES OF PLAY ^{2,4,7,8}

DRAMATIC PLAY

Loose parts—such as sticks, stones, acorns & pinecones—engage the imagination.

EXPLORATORY PLAY

Natural areas provide opportunities for children to explore.



SOLITARY PLAY

Areas under bushes or other nooks allow children to engage in alone time and contemplation.

CONSTRUCTIVE PLAY

Building things out of natural materials helps children learn hands-on skills.

LOCOMOTOR PLAY

Natural items such as logs and rocks can be carried. Looping paths allow walking, running and biking.

SUPPORTING RESEARCH

¹Rideout et al. (2010). Generation M2: Media in the lives of 8-18 year olds. Kaiser Family Foundation <https://kaiserfamilyfoundation.files.wordpress.com/2013/01/8010.pdf> ²Dymet & Bell (2008). Grounds for movement: Green school grounds as sites for promoting physical activity. *Health Educ Res*, 23(6), 952-962. ³Stanley (2011). The place of outdoor play in a school community: A case study of recess values. *Child Youth Environ*, 21(1), 185-211. ⁴Dennis et al. (2014). A post-occupancy study of nature-based outdoor classrooms in early childhood education. *Child Youth Environ*, 24(2), 35-52. ⁵Luchs & Fikus (2013). A comparative study of active play on differently designed playgrounds. *J Adven Educ & Out Learn*, 13(3), 206-222. ⁶Acar & Torquati (2015). The power of nature: Developing pro-social behavior towards nature and peers through nature-based activities. *Young Children*, 70(5), 62-71. ⁷Chawla (2015). Benefits of nature contact for children. *J Plan Lit*, 30(4), 433-452. ⁸Cloward Drown & Christenson (2014). Dramatic play affordances of natural and manufactured outdoor settings for preschool-aged children. *Child Youth Environ*, 24(2), 53-77.