



# Parks Are Outdoor Classrooms

Parks and greenspaces create living classrooms for children to improve critical thinking, social skills, and boost creativity.

While many of our parks and open spaces have been readily available to the public for years, the benefits of getting children outdoors has become increasingly understood. From outdoor science schools to field trips, encouraging children to have a hands-on experience has become more of a priority—because of the very real benefits it brings to children.

Not only do children get to apply science in the field, but being outdoors also actually calms the mind and relaxes the mood. With the ever-constant pull of technology, being in nature engages a child's mind in a very different way. Being outdoors helps raise levels of vitamin D and builds active, healthy bodies. Nature improves cognitive function by developing problem solving skills and imagination, and restoring

one's ability to focus. And growing evidence shows it may lower the risk of nearsightedness in children and adolescents.

Through partnerships, our parklands have become a living laboratory for students to learn and engage on a tangible level. From understanding plant adaptations by touching a hairy sycamore leaf versus a waxy scrub oak leaf, a child experiences the world in a more memorable way.

Our parks offer a place to explore the world, learn about nature and its interconnectedness, and become more aware. Parks increase opportunities for environmental education and promote a happier, healthier, and smarter generation of students.

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*This factsheet was made possible due to generous grant from The Boeing Corporation.*